Tamil TIMES

"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

– Voltaire

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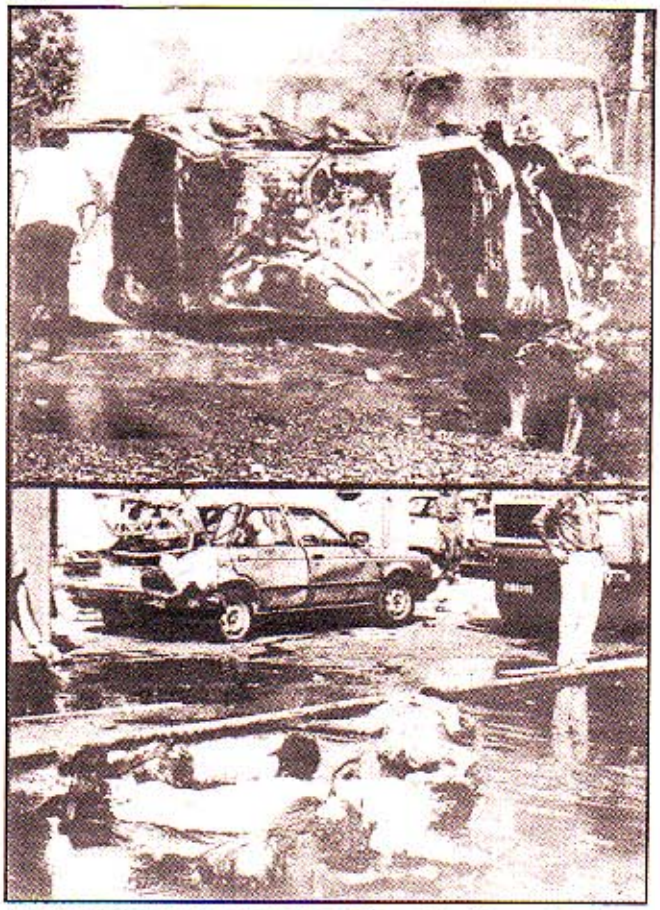
Ranjan Wijeratne

DEFENCE MINISTER & 30 OTHERS KILLED IN CAR BOMB ATTACK

When human flesh rained. . .



Ranjan Wijeratne's Mercedes Benz after the explosion (above) and dead bodies strewn near the scene.

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- ★ **Between Utopia & Death**
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- ★ **Opposition boycotts Parliament**
- ★ **LTTE Rejects Govt. Terms**
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- ★ **UN Human Rights Commission – Sri Lanka flayed**
- ★ **Wanton bombing raids**
- ★ **In the midst of tragedy – An Appeal to Expatriates**

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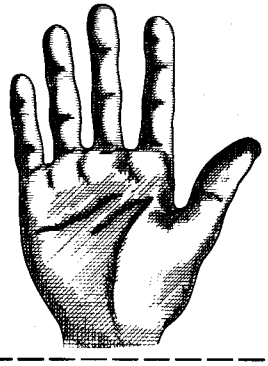

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POLITICS OF ASSASSINATION

The recent assassination of Sri Lanka's State Minister for Defence, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, in the course of which some thirty others also were killed and 70 more injured, is the latest example of the reality of the scourge that afflicts political life in the country, the politics of violence and assassination.

In 1956, a group of persons belonging to the minority Tamil Federal Party assembled and sat down at the Galle Face Green in Colombo to peacefully perform a Gandhian style protest against the imposition of Sinhala, the language spoken by the majority, as the only official language. A rabble of hooligans and thugs with encouragement and support from the then authorities set upon the peaceful protesters and violently attacked them. The security forces had specific orders from the then government led by the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike not to intervene or provide protection to the victims of this violent attack. Presumably the government wanted to teach the protesters a lesson. On the same day, those belonging to the Tamil community were set upon and attacked and their houses set on fire in Colombo and other major suburban centres. Thus was inaugurated the post-independence era of the use of political violence – state violence or state-inspired violence, or a combination of both, used in a deliberate and conscious manner in an apparent attempt to deal with political problems. Within two years, the then Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike himself became a victim of assassination by a power-hungry coterie of Buddhist clerics.

Subsequent years witnessed an escalation of the use of such violence to deal with political protests by those representing the Tamil community against what they perceived as persistent and continuing discriminatory measures by the state. Shortsighted successive governments led by opportunist politicians refused to see the emerging danger signals – a passive people beginning to accept a growing rebellious leadership. Sections of the Tamil youth took recourse to arms in response to the state's abuse of its monopoly of violence. The extravagant repressive counter-measures adopted by the government only served to make the Tamil youth place more and more reliance on the 'armed struggle' as the only means of challenge to the state's illegitimate use of violence. During later years, in the south of the country too, where substantial sections of the intelligentsia remained silent or even supportive of the state's violent measures against the Tamils and where the use of such violence was accompanied by an accelerated erosion of the rule of law, the subversion of the electoral process and abuse of basic human rights, the pattern of armed rebellion was replicated with a vengeance.

Sri Lanka remains at the top of the league of countries affected by internal armed conflicts. The use of violence and assassinations has become almost endemic. Torture, deaths in custody and 'disappearances' of persons at the hands of government forces have graduated into open and unmitigated slaughter of literally thousands. Anti-government armed groups have also indulged in brutal and senseless killing of their political opponents. The indiscriminate use of the bullet and the bomb, the grenade and the landmine, have begun to determine the course of the people's destiny. Individual assassination is sought to be glorified as a legitimate political weapon. A licence to kill each and every person suspected to be a political enemy is equated with legitimate armed resistance to repression by the state.

In the recent past, to name a few, on the Sinhala side, government and opposition politicians like Nandalal Fernando, Harsha Abeywardene, Vijaya Kumaranatunga and Rohana Wijeweera have been killed. University dons like Professor Stanley Wijesundera and journalists like Richard de Zoysa have been murdered. On the Tamil side, most of the well known Tamil politicians, including A. Amirthalingam, V. Yogeswaran, M. Alalasundaram, V. Dharmalingam and Sam Thambimuthu of the TULF, Annamalai of the NSSP and Vijeananthan of the CP have been assassinated. Even leaders of three of the main five Tamil militant groups, Sri Sabaratnam of the TELO, Uma Maheswaran of the PLOTE and Pathmanabah of the EPRLF have been murdered. Even those unassociated with political parties or groups like Dr. Rajini Thiranagam of the University of Jaffna and K. Kanthasamy of the Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation Organisation were killed.

Governments are ultimately responsible for whatever happens in society. And the fundamental cause for the appalling present state of affairs in Sri Lanka is the abdication of that responsibility by successive governments. The present government, while condemning the growth of gun culture, has itself promoted the proliferation of the possession and use of lethal weapons. While the so-called forces of law and order are deployed to carry out selective assassinations and mass murder, it is in no position to condemn or arrest violence and assassination by non-state armed groups or individuals.

Today no one, including the most protected politician or the best equipped rebel leader, is safe from the scourge of political violence and assassination in Sri Lanka. Only a return to civilised political discourse and rational negotiation can salvage the country and its people.

THE ASSASSINATION OF WIJERATNE

Rita Sebastian from Colombo

Colombo reeled with shock at the bomb explosion in the heart of the nation's capital that killed the late State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, and 30 others, including six members of the elite Special Task Force (STF) on March 2, and injured at least another 70, some of them critically.

The local newspaper that described it as the day when 'human flesh rained over a part of Colombo' was not far wrong. The explosion ripped bodies apart with heads, legs and fingers flying into neighbouring gardens, and charring bodies including the late Minister's beyond recognition.

The assassination of the late Ranjan Wijeratne, the most powerful man in the Cabinet, next to President Ranasinghe Premadasa, has created a political vacuum that will, be difficult to fill.

Whether the appointment of Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunge, a soft-liner, is a stop gap arrangement until the scheduled Cabinet reshuffle in the next few weeks, is not yet known.

However the 69-year-old Wijetunge's first public speech to Parliament, after taking over the Defence portfolio is being interpreted by political observers as a conciliatory gesture to woo the Tigers back to the negotiating table.

'I would like to make it very clear' said Wijetunge 'that the doors are still open for discussions and negotiations for anyone wanting to do so. For anyone wanting to enter the democratic process'. The government he said was not for a military solution in the north-east provinces and was committed to resolving issues through 'consultation, compromise and consensus'.

In marked contrast was Defence Secretary, General Cyril Ranatunge, telling newsmen, at the first security briefing following the assassination that there was not going to be any change in military strategy. On the contrary said the general, the late Minister's plans, which the military was intimately aware of, would be 'carried out with greater effort and greater confidence with the resolve to bring an end to it quickly'. He dismissed doubts about Wijetunge's capabilities of handling the Defence portfolio with the contention that Wijetunge has been chairing National Security Council meetings since 1989 and therefore was aware of what was going on, on the ground.

Ranjan Wijeratne was determined to 'wipe out the Tigers' as he would repeatedly vow. Having crushed the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) insurrection in the South he believed it was a matter of time before the forces, even if they didn't 'wipe out the Tigers' would get an upper hand over them.

The truth of his assessment is yet to be proved and that would well be only if the military continues with its offensive as General Ranatunge says it would.

Where the JVP was concerned army intelligence helped net in the elusive JVP leadership. Wijeratne was well aware that the battle with the LTTE was a different ball game, yet with the recent crackdown on Tiger activity in Tamil Nadu and tightened naval surveillance of the Palk Straits things seemed to work in his favour.

Several buildings in the vicinity were damaged beyond repair

Wijeratne had the security forces solidly behind him. He symbolised, specially for the ordinary rank and file a strength and a determination that inspite of reversals, kept their morale high. He was a Defence Minister who led from the Front, visiting military camps, inspecting quarters of soldiers and showing concern for the ordinary soldier on the battle front, in the constant line of guerrilla attacks.

Although Wijeratne was at the receiving end of bitter criticism over alleged army excesses, first in the South where according to Opposition politicians an estimated 60,000 persons have been killed or have disappeared without a trace, and then in the north where indiscriminate aerial bombardment has led to several civilian casualties, Wijeratne stood by his men.

'It is a war we are fighting' he said repeatedly to journalists, 'and in a war civilians are killed'. The ruthlessness of his approach dismayed several Liberal and Human Rights groups in the island but in a deeply divided Sri Lankan polity where the State was besieged by two insurrections he was the symbol of the hopes and aspirations of those who believed that he could return the country to peace and normalcy, where people could live, free from fear.

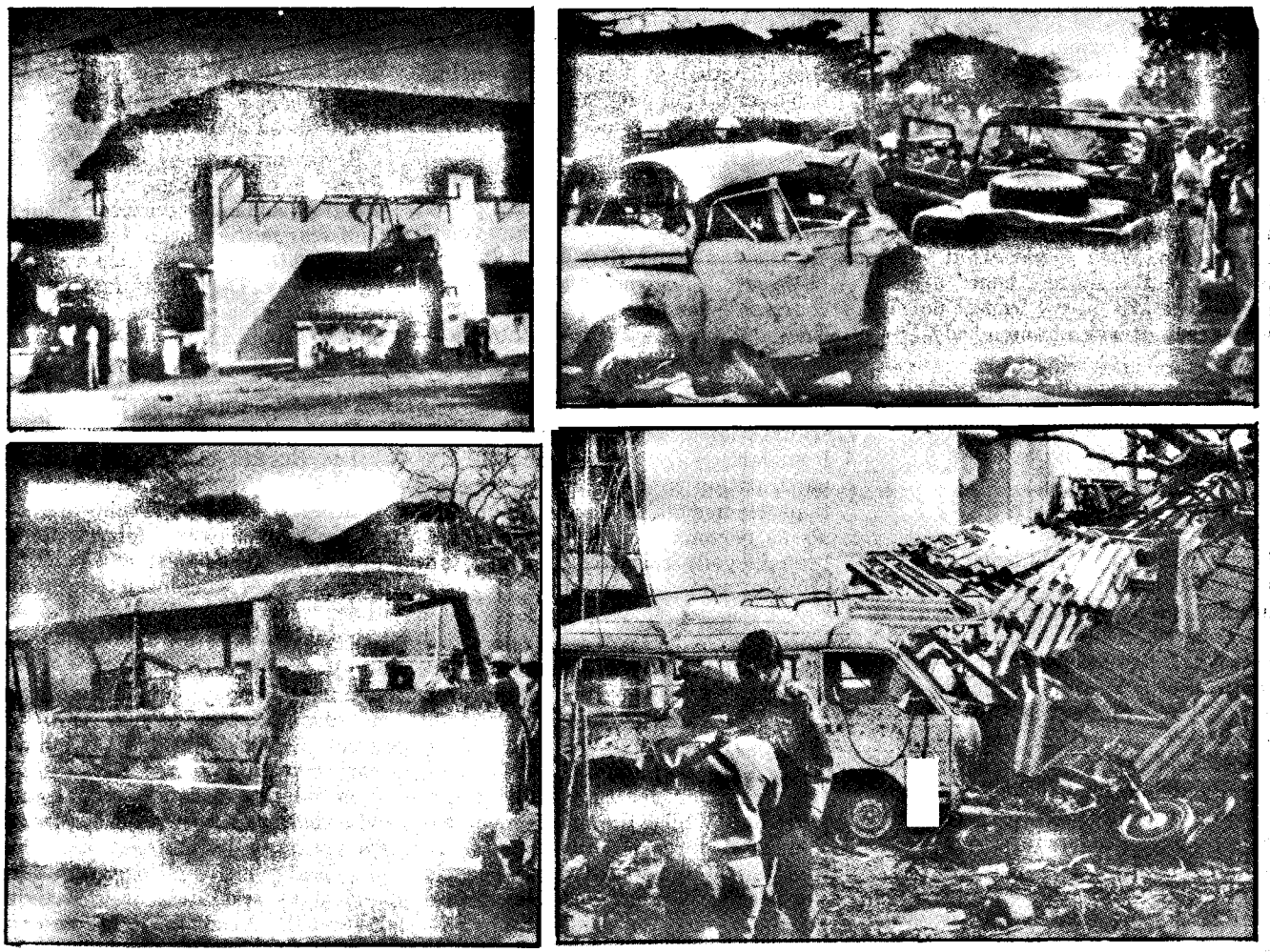
Even his bitterest foes concede that Ranjan Wijeratne was one of the country's few honest politicians. He said what he wanted to say, no matter whom he outraged or offended. His often brutish turn of phrase made him enemies. Diplomacy was not his forte, not even when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs at a time when Indo-Sri Lanka relations had hit its lowest point.

Whodunit? As crack police sleuths try to piece together evidence that would shed light on the identity of the assassins three groups have become suspect. The Tigers, the JVP and the Casino operators in Colombo involved in drug trafficking and money laundering and with whom Ranjan Wijeratne acted tough.

JVP involvement has been ruled out since the group is almost defunct now and would not have had the capability of undertaking such a sophisticated operation. That has the spotlight on the Tigers and the casino operators.

The Tigers known for their expertise in indigenous technology with regard to explosives and landmines have become prime suspect. But there is some doubt whether they could have orga-

When human flesh rained over Colombo



Scene of carnage on Havelock Road where mangled metal and pieces of charred human flesh became inseparable

nised such a complex operation in the heart of the city. The local press has reported that Batticaloa's area leader Newton was in Colombo two days before the explosion. That could be mere conjecture.

The raiding of the Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF) office cum residence in the vicinity of the explosion tried to establish a possible link with the Tigers. But that has since been ruled out too.

EDF Member of Parliament, Basheer Segudawood while condemning the killing said in a press statement that the 'EDF does not have any link or agreement with the LTTE'. The party, he said had given up its armed struggle and accepted democratic principles since the signing of the Indo-Lanka Agreement in July 1987.

The bomb explosion has once again demonstrated the frightening implications of political violence that seems to be slowly destroying the country's democratic institutions.

It is time for the country's leaders to come to grips with what is happening. It is time to shed communal politics, time for political leaders to come together in good faith to resolve the national question and thus bring an end to the violence and bloodshed.

By S. Selvakumar

Pieces of human flesh were strewn within a radius of about 150 yards. They were along Havelock Road, inside the crumbled shops in the vicinity, on the rooftops of nearby houses and some in the Police grounds.

That was the scene this columnist saw on arriving at the scene about half an hour after the powerful bomb that snuffed the life out of nearly 150 people including that of the State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne and eight STF men who were providing security cover to him.

The human flesh, some charred, some with bones sticking out was a gory sight even to the most hardened mind.

Dr. K. Yoheswaran, the popular surgeon of the Sri Jayewardenepura Hospital was getting ready to go to work and was just knotting his neck tie when the blast occurred. His house was at a safe 150 yards away inside a garden along Havelock Road.

'Look at my house' he said and took me inside and showed the messy state of his house. Furnitures were toppled and part of the ceiling had caved in. 'No, no, not only that, come out I will show you and he pointed out the front portion of his roof where a part of a human head was stuck on the roof. On the other side of the house he showed me a human limb dangling from a tree. It had a bone and the good surgeon unhesitatingly lifted it and said that it was an elbow. The rest of the anatomy, which he explained, was something beyond my comprehension. The doctor said he was thrown off onto the settee by the blast.

Right opposite the doctor's house lives D. Nelson. 'I felt as if the whole world had exploded before I came to realise that it was a bomb explosion. Then bits and pieces of my roof started falling. The front portion of my house started caving in. I rushed out with the children but could not proceed any further because there were a series of mini-explosions one after another', he added.

Nelson's children looked dazed and the women folk in the house were crying. 'Why are you crying, is anyone of your's hurt?' I asked one of the women folk in the house. 'How can we be – without crying. Mathathaya. Look at that' and she pointed out to a woman's head just above the forehead all charred, lying on a branch of a Murunga tree in their garden. That

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part of the woman's head still haunts me.

Next I met Luxman Tillekaratne, a private bus driver. He was almost crying though nothing had happened to the passengers in his bus.

'I was just passing Thummulla Junction when another Maharagma-bound bus overtook me. The driver was blocking my path and I had to drive slowly behind him. When I was about yards away from the scene I heard a loud explosion and a heavy impact on my windscreen. It was a human body. Due to the explosion my engine had stalled. Next, I saw the bus in front of me burning. Aiyo Mahatmaya, not a single passenger could jump out of that bus which was enveloped in flames by then. Thereafter, I heard a series of explosions. I got out of my bus and ran for cover'. He had minor cut injuries all over his body.

There was a crowd of people weeping and wailing, trying to break the police cordon, to identify the dead. But even if they were allowed, they wouldn't have been successful since all bodies were charred beyond recognition. Perhaps they might succeed if they knew how to identify their kith and kin from various parts of human bodies that were strewn along Havelock Road for a distance of about 300 yards from Thummulla Junction.

There wasn't a single house or shop in the vicinity that escaped the wrath of the devastating bomb.

R. Ravindra who cycles to the Police Grounds on Saturdays for athletic practices said he was reading about the Gulf War in the morning papers when he heard the explosion from a safe 500 yards away. The first thing that came to his mind was whether it was a Scud missile attack.

THE CASINO CONNECTION

Despite the widely held belief that the LTTE was behind Ranjan Wijeratne's murder, many in Colombo have not ruled out the possibility of a connection between the murder and the deportation of the controversial Singaporean casino king, Sim Hong Chye, better known among political and security circles and the growing casino community as Joe Sim, followed by a major crackdown against several foreigners, mainly from Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand, allegedly involved in a number of vices and rackets including narcotics, smuggling operations, prostitution, foreign exchange frauds and other criminal activities.

Following the government's decision, it was left to the late Ranjan Wijeratne to ensure that steps were taken to put the once powerful Joe Sim, who appeared to have had the ear of many in high places, on a flight bound for Singapore on 20 February following an expulsion order. On the following day Wijeratne told pressmen that Joe Sim had been expelled for violating the country's laws in more than one way.

In a statement to Parliament, Mr Ranjan Wijeratne referring to the expulsion order of Joe Sim said that he had been using several passports under two names. He had been operating in Sri Lanka under the name 'Tribond Group of Companies' located on the 6th floor of the capital's tallest building, Ceylinco House. This company had many so–called subsidiaries including Ascot International Tours (Pvt) Ltd, Tribond Lanka (Pvt) Ltd, The Centurian Club Lanka, Continental Club, Curzon Club, Jade Gardens, Junius Mining (Pvt) Ltd., Pattaya Restaurant (Pvt) Ltd.

Joe Sim had been operating junket tours of foreign nationals for participating in gambling in Sri Lanka. Inquiries had revealed that he had been engaged in illegal foreign currency transactions, procuring prostitutes from foreign countries for customers participating in his gambling operations. He had employed foreign nationals as personal bodyguards who had been illegally carrying firearms, the Minister said.

Joe Sim had obtained a resident visa on 20 January 1988 on the basis that he would be engaged in an approved project for exporting sharkfin, and his visa had been renewed from time to time. A person named David Lee had been assisting Joe Sim in his illegal activities. Whilst the government encouraged foreign investment and maintained an open economy it would not permit the misuse of these liberal policies to carry out illegal and immoral activities. Any Sri Lankan found to be giving assistance or patronage to international racketeers and crooks engaging in immoral and illegal activities would be dealt with according to law, the Minister warned.

During the night of 22 February, the Police Bureau of Special Operations carried out simultaneous raids on twelve casinos in Colombo and took into custody sixteen foreign nationals. Following their arrest and detention, police sources announced that many of them were going to be charged with criminal offences and for staying in the country without valid visas.

Gambling operations including casinos dominated by foreign South–east Asian nationals with local counterparts providing formal fronts had proliferated in the capital and even in suburban cities during the last three to four years, and of late they had become the focal point of all sorts of rackets and vices and underworld activities behind the facade of night–life entertainment for the rich and the powerful. Ranjan Wijeratne's promise to 'clean up the city' and swift action that followed would have naturally earned the wrath of these foreign nationals and their local counterparts.

The Hidden War Toll – 2000 Tamil Youth

By Steve Coll

Washington Post Service

BATTICALOA, Sri Lanka – Hundreds of ethnic Tamil youths in this isolated district of north–eastern Sri Lanka have disappeared in recent months amid a civil war after being taken into custody by government security forces, according to a registry compiled by Christian missionaries and civic leaders.

Relatives of the missing Tamils – exactly 2,009, according to the registry – assert that the youth were taken from refugee camps, movie houses and even hospital beds and then executed by security forces or pro–government 'death squads' that roam the region in jeeps and trucks.

Relief workers say they believe that some of the youths may have ended up on the piles of burning bodies periodically seen along roadsides here this winter.

Army and government officials have denied executing any Tamil detainees, but at the same time they are unable to account for the 2,009 missing youths. They say some may have been killed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a guerrilla force fighting to create a separate Tamil state in northeastern Sri Lanka.

The rash of disappearances in Batticaloa, a coastal city of 50,000, represents just one aspect of the brutality and terror in Tamil areas of this divided island nation.

Since June, after years of desultory

Continued on Page 18

Govt Orders Refugees to Quit from UNHCR Camp

The lives of several thousand refugees have been put at risk after the Government announced yesterday that it was going to conduct military operations near a United Nations administered refugee camp and ordered the camp evacuated. The U.N. officials said they would 'strongly protest the decision through the appropriate channels'.

The Minister of State for Defence, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, said refugees at the Madhu Church Camp, which is being administered by the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) had been asked to leave temporarily to allow military operations in the area. The military was planning a land and air operation against two LTTE bases near the refugee centre.

The Minister said leaflets had been dropped over the camp asking the refugees to move out. Sources at Madhu Camp, however, reported that no leaflets had been dropped as yet, and no military activity had started either.

Relief workers say there are at least 20,000 Tamil refugees at the Madhu Camp in Mannar district which is the largest in the North and East. Mr. Wijeratne claimed there were only 11,000 people, of whom '2,000 were Tigers'. The Sri Lankan Government, however, does not venture anywhere near the camp, which like most of the Northern Province is outside the control of the army. The relief agencies working at the camp are a far more authentic source of information.

VULNERABLE: Relief workers say there is no way these people can be physically evacuated before military operations start, and there is nowhere for them to go. The Madhu Camp has sprung up around a church in the jungles in an isolated part of Mannar district. Refugees from all over the North and East have flocked to the camp for sanctuary because it is isolated, and free of military activity.

Once military operations start, there is a very real likelihood that the camp will be bombed from the air, and that civilians will become victims of any operations in the area. The refugees live in a vast encampment of tents, which would be extremely vulnerable to air attack.

NOT PRACTICAL: Mr.. Wijeratne has asked if the refugees could move to Mannar or Vavuniya town, but given the lack of transport, this is not practical. The Minister said buses and lorries would be provided but relief workers on the spot say there is no way the Government is going to be able to get enough vehicles through the jungles to evacuate such a large number of people.

Mr. Wijeratne said he had sent letters to the relief agencies working in Madhyu Church to clear out of the area.

200 TAMILS ROUNDED-UP IN COLOMBO

In a major crackdown in Colombo only hours after unknown assassins blew up Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne's official convoy of vehicles on Havelock Road in Colombo, police teams set about carrying out raids and cordon–and–search operations in the course of which at least 200 Tamils were rounded–up and detained in custody.

The detained Tamils were moved into police stations where they were subjected to intensive interrogation to ascertain any possible connection with the car bomb attack.

The police who have so far failed to achieve any breakthrough in their inquiries, have offered a reward of one million rupees to any person giving information leading to the apprehension of those responsible or involved in the bomb attack.

SRI LANKA REFUGEES TRUST IN HOLY SHRINE

Civil war victims are struggling to keep a threatened haven.
Christopher Morris reports from Madhu

At 6am on Sundays, Madhu church, deep in the heart of the northern Sri Lankan jungles is packed with worshippers. A remote village, which used to come alive only on feast days, when hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all over the country descended on the shrine, Madhu is now home to nearly 20,000 refugees.

It has been a sanctuary for hundreds of years. Catholics fleeing from persecution by local Hindu kings, and by the colonial protestant Dutch, arrived at a jungle clearing which had a plentiful supply of water. They carried the statue which was to become Our Lady of Madhu.

Seeking sanctuary today are some of the hundreds of thousands fleeing from the vicious war in the north and east of the island between Sri Lankan goverment forces and Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas. Now the government has said it wants the refugee camp evacuated so it can launch military operations in the rebel–held jungles.

But the refugees are determined not to leave the security of the camp, which is run by officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Since work began on the site last September, nearly 1,000 individual huts, and two dozen large communal huts, have been built.

The UNHCR also brings food convoys across the battle lines from the south, feeding the refugees and thousands of other people in the surrounding area. These efforts ensure there is no shortage of basic foods here, and the surrounding jungles provide plenty of delicious extras, such as peacock, iguana and wild boar.

Madhu also has a rapidly developing market, with fresh produce on sale every day. People pass the time helping to repair roads or by building more huts for those without shelter. There is a sense of stability about the place, which the refugees believe they will not find elsewhere.

The army argues that the middle of the war zone is no place for a refugee camp. But fear prevents people from travelling south. Nearly everyone has a relative or friend among the thousands of civilians who have disappeared or been killed in the past few months.

The UNHCR has sent a formal protest to the government, urging it to reconsider its decision to evacuate Madhu. The fear in the camp is that if no one is willing to leave, military operations, including aerial bombing, may begin anyway.

Our Lady of Madhu has been making her own news recently. The day after the government announced its plans to evacuate the camp, thousands of people say they saw one of her statues rocking gently back and forth. The next day, the government minister who had made the announcement, Ranjan Wijeratne, was killed by a bomb in Colombo. 'It was a sign', said a man near the church. 'We have faith in Our Lady'.

Locals say Madhu has a history of miracles. Many people who have been bitten by snakes come to pray and are apparently cured. Sand from Madhu, which is kept inside the church, is considered holy. Pilgrims travel for many miles to be blessed with it.

So it is a powerful combination of pragmatic and spiritual reasons which draws people. Father Jayasoorajah, the administrator of the shrine, said: 'As soon as fighting started again last June, people came – it has always been a place where they feel safe. People from all religions have faith in the shrine and its sanctity'.

(The Guardian 8.3.91)

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Opposition Boycotts Parliament

Members of Parliament belonging to the opposition parties are continuing a boycott of Sri Lanka's parliament following violent incidents on 21 February in the course of which MPs and even Ministers belonging to the ruling United National Party are alleged to have physically attacked opposition MPs.

The chief target of the ruling party MPs was the irrepressible NSSP MP, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, who following disputed ruling by the Deputy Chairman of Committees, occupied the Speaker's chair while the Deputy Chairman was occupying his seat below the Speaker's rostrum. Mr Nanayakkara is reported to have been dragged from the chair, violently assaulted and kicked by government MPs and when other MPs of the opposition came to the rescue of Mr Nanayakkara, there was a general violent free-for-all. Some members wrestled with each other on the red carpet of the parliamentary floor.

Trouble started on the previous day when opposition MPs disputed the ruling by the Deputy Speaker allowing the government to debate the Agrarian Services (Amendment) Bill which the opposition alleged the government was trying to rush through without adequate notice and violation of an agreement reached previously between government and opposition whips.

Even as the opposition MPs are boycotting parliament, a motion of censure against Mr Vasudeva Nanayakkara was subsequently moved and adopted with only government MPs in attendance.

'Govt's Conditions Unacceptable – LTTE Deputy Leader

LTTE second in command Mahendraraja alias Mahaththaya has told 'The Hindu' that the three conditions the Sri Lanka Government has laid down for talks with 'Tigers' were unacceptable.

The conditions are, the LTTE should lay down its weapons, the military wing of the LTTE should be involved in the negotiations and all the other political parties should be involved.

In his first interview since the fighting resumed last June, Mahaththaya had told 'The Hindu' correspondent Thomas Abraham in Jaffna:

'We have already clearly told the Sri Lankan Government that we will not lay down our arms until the Tamil problem is solved'. On the condition that only military wing should be involved in talks, Mr Mahendraraja said: 'It is for our leadership to decide who will participate in talks'. He made it clear that the LTTE was not going to tolerate other Tamil groups, whom he described as 'anti-national', participating in future peace talks. 'They don't have a policy at all. One day they will support the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, one day they will support the Sixth Amendment, one day they will accept the unitary Constitution ... and they have cooperated with the invading armies to kill our own people'.

'The Hindu' report said:

Mr. Mahendraraja, a soft spoken man who chooses his words carefully, appeared perfectly relaxed, and showed no sign of being under any sort of pressure. The interview was conducted in an LTTE office near Kondavil, in a long thatch roofed room lined with portraits of the LTTE martyrs. Outside, armed LTTE cadres in well tailored camouflage uniforms and ankle length combat boots stood under the palm trees scanning the horizon for Sri Lankan aircraft. 'Mahaththaya' spoke in Tamil, and Mr. Yogaratnam Yogi translated it into English.

The LTTE leaders did not give any indications that they felt they were on the losing end of the war, and seemed confident that they would be able to outlast the Sri Lankan Army. Asked for his assessment of how the war was going for the LTTE, 'Mahaththaya' pointed out that the LTTE was no longer a solely guerrilla force, but had become a conventional 'National Liberation Army'.

Change in Tactics: 'In 1970 we began as a guerrilla force. But from June (when the current round of fighting broke out), we have changed our mode of struggle to that of a national liberation army. We have captured a Sri Lankan Army camp'. The LTTE second in command, however, added that the change in tactics was only partial, and that the Tigers would still use guerrilla tactics when they thought it appropriate. He would not, however, be drawn into a discussion on the LTTE's military capabilities and tactics, or give his assessment of how the war was evolving. 'We cannot predict what is going to happen .The struggle will go on, but we cannot predict what exactly is going to happen'. Mr. Mahendraraja said the Sri Lankan Government might take advantage of the international community's pre-occupation with the Gulf war to launch a major offensive.

INDIA MOOTS INTERIM COUNCIL FOR NORTH-EAST

The Indian High commissioner, Mr N.N. Jha, has suggested that an interim administration for the North and East Comprising the non-LTTE Tamil groups be formed as a first step towards restoring Tamil self-government in the area.

Mr. Jha said that as it would not be legally possible to resurrect the North-East Provincial Council, an interim council would be formed to allow the Tamil groups to play a role in the civil administration.

The High Commissioner said that even if the ground situation did not allow the interim council to play a major role in the civil administration, there would be a psychological benefit for the Tamils. 'The Tamil groups could at least attempt to play a role then. They could do relief work, distributing rations and so on. This would have its own political impact'.

India has not formally made this proposal to Sri Lanka, but Mr. Jha said he had discussed the idea with Sri Lankan officials and Ministers.

He said that the proposal was a follow-up of the political concerns expressed during Mr. V.C. Shukla's visit here last month and added that 'since we are committed to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987, we have a continuing interest in what is happening in the North and East by virtue of the agreement'

The High Commissioner also made it clear that his proposal was intended to support the political initiatives that the President, Mr. R. Premadasa had taken. 'The President has made a lot of concessions. It can be carried a small step further'.

Mr. Jha said that by leaving a vacuum in the administration in the North and East, an impression could be created that 'the seat was being kept warm for the LTTE'.

'Why should that be so?' he asked. 'There are other groups who also enjoy a presence in the area'.

In his last press briefing before his assassination, State Minister for Defence Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne ruled out the idea of an interim Council on the ground that the laws of the country as they stood did not provide for such a Council. If one was to be set up, then new legislation had to be enacted.

Asked about the reaction of other Tamil parties to the setting up of such a Council, Mr. Wijeratne said, 'I would not expose them to the wrath of the Tigers. I would have them alive rather than dead. The LTTE had decimated almost the entire Tamil leadership'. To a suggestion that some Tamil group favoured the formation of an interim Council, the Minister said, 'I know. Some of them want to go to the next world. I do not want them to go there. I prefer to have them with us'.

Wanton Bombing Raids in Valvettiturai

From Thomas Abraham

VELVETTITURAI (Jaffna peninsula). Sri Lankan Airforce planes dropped at least one barrel bomb, a crude version of a napalm bomb, on a school in this coastal village, and destroyed temples, churches, schools and houses during four days of wanton bombing and artillery fire that appears to have been aimed solely at civilians. A good part of this town, which is the birthplace of the LTTE leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, and several other LTTE leaders, has been reduced to rubble, but an LTTE base slightly outside the town was not touched.

The attacks took place from January 20 to 23, but news of the extent of destruction, and the scale of attacks on civilian targets has not yet filtered to the outside world. 'This is the worst attack we have ever suffered, worse than the Vadamarachi offensive, worse than the IPKF. It is the worst in our history', said Mr. K. Shanmugasundaram, a former ship's purser who has formed a rehabilitation committee for the town.

The Sri Lankan Government said the air attacks were aimed at the 'LTTE boat landing points on the coast', but a visit to the town makes it clear that the air force has concentrated on unmistakably civilian targets.

The roofs of the two huge temples, Sivan and Muthumariamman temples have been destroyed. But the walls of the 100–year old temples, which adjoin each other, are intact. Their interiors are littered with debris from broken tiles. Four other temples have also been bombed. A bomb dropped in the compound has taken the roof off the local church.

Barrel Bomb

The twisted remains of a barrel bomb can still be seen sticking out of a crater in a class room in Sivaguru Vidyasaram school. The bomb consists of a metal barrel, of the kind that is used to tranpost kerosene and diesel, stuffed with pieces of rubber, chemicals and petroleum products which explode on impact. Bits of molten rubber which stick to a victims skin are also released when the bomb explodes. Fortunately there were no children around when the bomb was dropped, but desks and chairs have been burned to cinders, and the walls of the class room have been charred. Other conventional bombs have completely wrecked the school buildings.

The attacks on the temples and schools are particularly horrifying, because these are the places where people take refuge during bomb attacks. 'We were lucky, most people did not go to the temples and schools this time. They either ran away to other villages, or went into their bunkers when the bombing started', said Mr. Shanmugasundaram.

Ten people have been killed in the three–day attack. The casualty is less because the people have learnt to protect themselves. Most house–owners in the peninsula have built bunkers in their gardens. – underground air raid shelters made of concrete. Poorer people take advantage of a large number of shelters that have been built in public places.

The Government claims that the people of Velvettiturai were given a 48–hour warning before the attack. But the local residents said they were barely given three hours notice. 'They dropped leaflets from a helicopter at around 12 noon on January 20, giving us 48 hours. But just three hours later, at around 3.30pm the bombing started', recalls Dr. K.A. Sundaram, a medical practitioner. 'The bombing went on till 5.30pm. When it stopped, most people ran away to nearby villages. Then at night, helicopters and planes dropped flares and bombed us. The next day it went on from 6am to 4.30pm. It went on like this till about noon on January 23.

By the time the attack ended, 101 houses had been completely destroyed, and 451 had been partially damaged, six temples, one church, and four schools had been bombed. Ten people had been killed, and 20 injured.

The town is still largely deserted, as more than half the population have fled. There are a few disconsolate groups of people, sifting through the rubble of their homes, looking for something to salvage. 'This is the third time this has happened to me', said Dr. Sundaram, standing in his roofless house a bomb exploded just behind his house, shattering the windows. The floors are thick with broken tiles and crockery.

The attack on Vadamarachi is only one of a growing number of air attacks on unmistakably civilian targets and appear to form part of a pattern. At the tiny village of Puthukidiyiruppu in Mullaitivu district, two air force Sia Marchetti planes dropped four bombs, killing 23 people and injuring 13. Among the survivors who were brought by the Red Cross to the Jaffna general hospital, are a 10–year–old boy, Pradeepan, who has lost two fingers on his left hand, and a six–year–old girl, who was hit by splinters on her left leg. According to eyewitness, the bombers came in at around 5.30pm on January 31 and dived straight at the market place and let loose four bombs at the crowd of between 100 and 150. A school with refugees and a small medical post flying the Red Cross flag was just 100 metres away, and the people on the spot are convinced that the refugee camp was the real target of the bombers.

Another school which was being used as a refugee camp at Kokkuvil in Jaffna was bombed in the evening of February 2. There were 43 refugee families in the school, and a 14–year–old girl lost her leg while two others suffered minor injuries.

Curious Object

The previous week, the Hindu high school at Kondavil had been attacked, the boat jetty at Pooneryn was strafed, and a temple at Murukandy, south of Killinochi was bombed. A man, his three–and–a–half year old daughter and a 10–year–old boy were killed at Murukandy. A barrel bomb dropped in a field at Murukandy failed to explode, and has now been kept in the market place, where the curious gape at it.

'They seem to be concentrating entirely on civilian targets', said a long time Jaffna resident. 'Civilians have always been killed, but over the past few weeks, the air force seems to be concentrating on market places, schools and refugee camps'.

There is little evidence that any LTTE member has been killed or wounded in any of these attacks, and the only result they seem to be having is to confirm the people in their belief that they can never expect any justice from the Government in Colombo.

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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

SRI LANKA FLAYED FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

The human rights situation in Sri Lanka figured prominently during the 47th sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Commission held in Geneva during February-March this year.

Reports submitted to the sessions by the Commission's Working Group on Involuntary or Enforced Disappearances and the Special Raporteur on Summary or Arbitrary Killings contained substantial sections relating to the large scale 'disappearances' and summary executions that have taken place in the island and reported to the United Nations.

During the debates on the gross violation of human rights, a number of government delegations and Non-Governmental Organisations intervened to critically comment on the widespread violation of human rights in Sri Lanka covering the situation in the Tamil areas as well as in the rest of the island.

In their reply, the Sri Lankan government's delegation led by the Presidential Special Advisor on International Affairs, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon did not even make an attempt to challenge or deny the various allegations of human rights violations against his government.

Joint Statement by 22 NGOs

The following is the text of a joint intervention by 22 NGOs, namely:

1. International Federation – Terre des Hommes,
2. International Educational Development Inc.,
3. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,
4. Pax Romana,
5. Liberation,
6. International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples,
7. International Organisation for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,
8. Movement Against Racism and for Friendship Among Peoples,
9. Latin American Federation of associations of Relatives of Disappeared Detainees,
10. World Conference on Religion and Peace,
11. Disabled Peoples' International,
12. International Abolitionist Federation,
13. International Indian Treaty Council,
14. World University Service,
15. World Alliance of Reformed Churches,
16. International Association of Educators for World Peace,
17. International Alert,
18. American Association of Jurists,
19. International Peace Bureau,
20. International Association of Democratic Lawyers,
21. Centre Europe – Tiers Monde,
22. Arab Organisation for Human Rights.

'As a group of 22 NGOs we wish to convey to the Commission our very serious concern regarding the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sri Lanka. Concerns have been identified in the oral interventions of a number of member nations of the Commission, by observer nations, and by many of the NGOs present. We make this statement together to urge the Commission to further express its collective concern regarding Sri Lanka in the form of a resolution as it has done in the case of many other countries.

The resumption of armed hostilities in June 1990 in the North-East Province between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has been accompanied by increasing human rights violations in this region. In addition to 3,000 combatant deaths reported by the government, local organizations have reported at least 4,000 deaths amongst the unarmed civilian population. Of particular concern is the relentless and indiscriminate aerial bombardment of the north. The proliferation of violence has resulted in the total disruption of economic life and inadequate supply of essential services such as food, electricity and water. The population is being deprived of their human right to survive.

As of December 7 1990 the Department of Social Services indicated that it was providing assistance to 1.2 million people displaced from their homes in the north and east. At least 210,000 people have fled to Tamil Nadu as refugees.

In the South, too, the human rights situation continues to create grave concern. The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances still has 1,140 outstanding cases. Human rights organizations in Sri Lanka became aware of 40 disappearances in the month of January 1991 alone. The government of Sri Lanka acknowledged on December 3, 1990 that 8,295 people remain in detention under Emergency Regulations and the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The continuation of the state of emergency permits the state to engage in violations of many of the democratic rights of the people of Sri Lanka such as the right to freedom of association and the right of expression. The failure to safeguard the rights of all peoples on the island, the overall militarization of society and the continuing atmosphere of violence and terror all create a situation in which democratic and fundamental rights are continually abused and violated.

As NGOs we are convinced that a resolution on Sri Lanka from this 47th Session of the Commission on Human Rights would decrease human rights violations and promote fundamental freedoms in Sri Lanka. We urge you to pass a resolution which: (i) recalls resolution #61/87 which recognizes the necessity of ending the existing armed hostilities to enable the resumption of negotiations; (ii) expresses serious concern regarding the continuing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sri Lanka and (iii) conveys its support for the role that the Centre for Human Rights and its mechanisms can play in the promotion of human rights in Sri Lanka'.

Pax Romana

The following is the text of the intervention by Pax Romana:

'The years 1989 and 1990 can perhaps be called the darkest in the history of Sri Lanka. During this time we, the people of Sri Lanka, witnessed mass killings, abduction and disappearances. We saw bodies burning on the roadside, and bodies floating down our rivers. Most of the people

affected by this violence were from the poor and rural areas of the island, north and south. The Amnesty International Report for 1990 recorded over 2,000 cases of disappearances, while the Report of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances said it had transmitted complaints regarding 1,182 cases to the Sri Lankan government, of which 1,140 remained as "outstanding" as of the date of the report. A fact-finding mission consisting of 2 British members of the European Parliament and 2 lawyers who visited Sri Lanka in September 1990 reported in November 1990 that they had received reports of over 60,000 cases of disappearances, in the south of the country alone, since 1987.

The case of the abduction and murder of journalist Richard de Zoysa is well known throughout the world. Despite a demand for an Independent Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances of his death, there is no sign of the state taking any steps to prosecute the Police personnel identified by Mr. de Zoysa's mother as being among the group that took her son away on the night of February 18, 1990. Among the yet unresolved cases of abduction is that of Mr. K. Kugamoorthy, a well known human rights activist and programme producer of the Tamil service of the state Broadcasting Corporation, who was abducted while on his way home from work on September 6, 1990. These are only two cases which have received wide publicity internationally; there are thousands more who have been abducted, killed or simply "disappeared". In recent months the Mothers' Front of the South, the Organisation of Families of the Disappeared and Mothers & Daughters of Lanka have joined hands with human rights organisations in the country to demand justice on behalf of their loved ones.

In January 1991, the President announced the appointment of a Three Member Commission to inquire into "cases of the involuntary removal of persons"; however, the mandate of this Commission is dated from the 11th January 1991. Thus, the period of 1989 and 1990, years during which thousands of people disappeared in Sri Lanka, will not be taken into account by this Commission, and all groups concerned about the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka should be concerned about the implications of such an act.

The continuing state of emergency in Sri Lanka also permits the restriction and violation of fundamental rights with impunity. For example, Emergency Regulation No. 1 of 1990 restricts the rights of workers and students to organise in their places of work, study or residence, severely restricting the right of association and organisation.

In recent months, we have also observed a new trend in the form of arrest, detention and even disappearance of persons. In some of the suburban industrial areas of Colombo, for example, we have seen the Police and state officials conniving with factory owners to harass and intimidate workers. The case of Raymond Perera, a trade union leader of the Associated Battery Manufacturers factory, is one that deserves special mention. He disappeared on the 4th September 1990; due to heavy pressure from national and international labour organisations, he "re-appeared" on the 21st September, having been abandoned, blind-folded on a bridge at one of the entry points to the city of Colombo. He was formally arrested on the 5th October, and is still in detention at the Mount Lavinia Police Station, with no cause given as to his prolonged detention.

The Emergency Regulations also permit the indefinite detention of suspected "subversives"; in December 1990, the Minister of State for Defence admitted that there were 6,952 youths detained under Emergency laws, and a further 1,343 under the infamous Prevention of Terrorism Act. The rights of these persons are severely restricted; many detainees have not been permitted access to family or lawyers even after Court has given directions that such permission be granted. In recent months, there have been also many complaints of attempts by state and Police personnel to subvert the cause of justice even in those cases which have been brought to court. In December 1990 alone there were 2 instances on which the Supreme Court warned Police officers not to intimidate or interfere with persons who had filed fundamental rights cases alleging illegal detention and torture, after the applicants had made representations to the Court that such acts of intimidation had taken place. Thus the right to a fair trial is seriously jeopardised. Conditions of imprisonment is another matter of concern; in January 1991, one political detainee was killed and several others injured in a clash with prison guards at the Magazine Prisons in Colombo; human rights groups have expressed their concern at the manner in which the inquiry into the incident is proceeding.

The emergency has also been used to disperse anti-government demonstrations, even when they have been peaceful and silent protests, as for example, the demonstration organised by the United Socialist Alliance in the Central Province capital of Kandy on the 15th December 1990. In January too, several anti-Gulf War demonstrations were dispersed by the Police. When questioned on this issue, the Ministry of State has said that demonstrations and pickets are not permitted but meetings could be held.

Recently, at a public meeting in a small town in the south, Hakmana, the President of Sri Lanka was reported as saying "but remember, under the emergency, the security forces will get a free hand to implement certain measures to restore peace in the country, which I won't be able to help. In that event, please don't ask for statistics once the job is done". Given that this is the attitude of the ruler of Sri Lanka, can we expect any effort on their part to defend the right to life of the citizens of Sri Lanka?

It is in this context, Mr. Chairman, that we strongly urge the Commission for Human Rights to support those initiatives within Sri Lanka that are making a stand for peace and democracy. We urge you to support a process which will lead to the cessation of military hostilities and to the evolution of a negotiated political settlement of the ethnic conflict in our country. We see this to be an essential pre-condition for the restoration of peace and democracy to our country. We also appeal for your support to ensure that the visit of the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances to Sri Lanka will take place as scheduled in 1991; we appeal for international pressure to compel the Sri Lankan government to publish a list of all detainees and to appoint an Independent Commission of Inquiry into Disappearances dating from 1987 onwards. The support of the international community is a crucial factor in deciding the future of our country and of our people, the people of the island of Sri Lanka'.

International Education Inc.

The following is the text of the intervention by International Education Development Inc.:

'In Sri Lanka a civil war still rages. We were heartened by the peace initiative of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam of December 21, 1990 and by the government's initial response announced by a Communique on January 3, 1991. Regrettably, the government was unwilling to continue a cease fire.

The situation in Sri Lanka has been detrimental to the Tamil people there for forty years, especially since the 1950 disenfranchisement of the plantation Tamils reduced Tamil voting power to less than 20% and increased the Sinhala voting power to 80%.

The many peaceful means to defend human rights tried by the subjugated Tamils all failed, and, especially after the massacres of Tamils in 1983, the Tamil people have increasingly sought the use of force to defend basic human rights and their aspirations as a people. At this point, the Tamil people appear totally unwilling to accept any alien domination – they have justifiably lost all confidence that a

Sinhala-dominated government will ever protect the full rights of Tamil people.

This forum has heard voluminous testimony about Sri Lanka from many NGOs and governments at one time or another in the past ten years. Today, the situation is probably worse than at any other time in these ten years. Current examples include:

(1) 2009 disappeared Tamil youth in recent months, according to a tally compiled by Christian missionaries, some of them Jesuits affiliated with IED;

(2) nearly 6000 Tamil civilian casualties since June 1990;

(3) up to 60,000 deaths in the South since 1987;

In spite of the worsening situation there has been no official Commission action on Sri Lanka since 1987. IED most strongly urges the Commission on Human Rights to address the on-going armed conflict and human rights situation in Sri Lanka with a view to helping the parties to the conflict arrive at a ceasefire, a process of dialogue to meet the legitimate demands of the Tamil people and full restoration of human rights to all Sinhala citizens'.

Amnesty International

The following are extracts from the intervention by Amnesty International:

'There are still other situations where the Commission's expressions of concern have not been followed by sustained scrutiny. In 1987 the Commission adopted a resolution on SRI LANKA. Although the government has, since 1989, granted access to the International Committee of the Red Cross and has taken some other steps aimed at containing abuses, grave and widespread human rights violations have persisted for more than seven years and continue in 1991. These have occurred in the context of government measures to suppress armed opposition movements in the northeast and the south. Abuses, by opposition groups, including the torture and killing of prisoners, have been extensive but Amnesty International believes that this cannot absolve the government of its responsibility to curb violations committed by the security forces. During 1990, thousands of people, including young children, 'disappeared' or were extrajudicially executed by government forces in the northeast after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had renewed its offensive against the government in June. In the south, 'disappearances' and extrajudicial executions continued to be carried out by government forces and 'death squads' linked to them, although to a lesser degree than in 1989. However, last year evidence of the scale of violations committed in the south in 1988 and 1989 mounted, indicating that tens of thousands of people had 'disappeared' or had been extrajudicially executed. The government has taken no effective steps to clarify the fate of these or the thousands of other people who have "disappeared" or been killed in recent years.

Those committed to the cause of justice in their respective communities (are frequently viewed as threats to the security of the state and) often become targets of "disappearance". In SRI LANKA, where several thousand people have "disappeared" in the context of the current conflict, Kumaraguru Kugamoorthy, a member of the Tamil minority who was active in the defence of civil rights, was detained by a group of armed men, one in camouflage uniform, and "disappeared" in September 1990. The search undertaken by his relatives has included letters to the President of Sri Lanka and to the Minister of State for Defence. His whereabouts remain unknown'.

Women's International

The following is the text of the intervention by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom:

'From Sri Lanka, too, we have received disturbing reports about the way in which more than 1.2 million persons displaced as a result of the internal conflict are being treated, and would like to draw your attention to the basic needs and rights of these persons.

Many women have been killed as a result of state violence and non-state armed groups, especially since 1987. As usual, the sexual abuse of women is one of the most terrible consequences of the war and civil conflict.

Many who have witnessed killings and abductions have been silenced. Fear and intimidation are used by both state and non-state armed groups. People who dare to speak out against this injustice have been brutaly assassinated. Rajini Thiranagama, a well known human rights activist, was shot in cold blood in Jaffna in September 1989, shortly before the publication of the book *The Broken Palmyrah*, which she co-authored. The book condemned human rights violations committed by the armed forces of the Sri Lankan and Indian governments, and by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. In the same month, Gladys Jayawardena, chairperson of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation was shot dead in Colombo for having defied a JVP-People's Liberation Front edict prohibiting the import of essential drugs from India.

The brutal manner in which the Sri Lankan Armed Forces have treated women taken into custody for alleged involvement in "subversive" activity, has been well documented. One woman testified that she had seen bodies of raped and sexually brutalised women floating down the river near her home. There are many women on the lists of disappeared persons.

In recent months, several cases of the disappearance of released detainees have been brought to our attention. Many family members of the disappeared have been threatened not to proceed with inquiries or with habeas corpus cases. Reports of threats and intimidation of persons who have filed cases alleging violation of their fundamental rights have reached us.

These examples show that there is little justice for victims of human rights violations in Sri Lanka at present. We are concerned that the mothers, wives, and daughters of those who have been killed, abducted, disappeared or detained in the past are today being intimidated and targeted.

Despite all efforts to silence them, the Mothers' Front of Sri Lanka held its first national meeting on 19 February 1991. More than 10,000 women came together to affirm their commitment to peace, negotiation among all parties to the conflict, and unity in demanding justice from the government. We appeal to this Commission to urge the Sri Lankan government to facilitate the visits to Sri Lanka in 1991, of the Working Group on Disappearances and the Special Raporteur on Executions and to guarantee protection to all who speak out against violations of human rights.

In each of the cases mentioned, there are non-violent alternatives to war. These alternatives begin with the cessation of hostilities and the gross violations of human right that accompany armed conflicts, and the initiation of negotiations to settle the conflicts peacefully. States are furthermore obliged to promote respect for political and civil, as well as economic, social and cultural rights to create conditions favourable to the realization of the right to development'.

(Continued in next issue)

President refers to 'Mothers of Murderers'

Addressing a public rally at Galewela in Dambulla on 23 February President Premadasa in an obvious reference to the public rally held by the 'Mother's Front' on 19 February, said that it should be remembered that the thousands brutally killed by the JVP also had mothers. He added that during the orgy of JVP killings and violence those in the opposition had come to him and pleaded to re-enforce the state of emergency and take concrete steps to wipe out the JVP.

'At that time I thought to myself what they would say after the threat was overcome and everything was over. I consulted political parties for several days and had a five hour discussion with the government parliamentary group and every MP also wanted the emergency re-enforced. I can bring out the tapes of the talks I had with the opposition at that time and the relevant press clippings and show to the world what those who had now joined hands with the mothers of JVP murderers said then, 'Don't force me to do it', the President said.

AN APPEAL TO EXPATRIATE TAMILS

IN THE MIDST OF WAR AND TRAGEDY

[Reproduced here is the section titled 'An Appeal to Expatriate Tamils' from Report No. 6 issued by The University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) in February 1991. The 113 page Report published under the title 'The Politics of Destruction & The Human Tragedy' covers the period September 1990 to January 1991. Since the outbreak of the war between government forces and the LTTE in June 1990, the UTHR(J) has published many comprehensive Reports, on 'War of June 1990', 'Bombings in Jaffna', 'Operation Major – Military Operations in the Islands off Jaffna', 'A Bloody Stalemate', and 'The War and its Consequences in the Amparai District'.]

In the midst of war and tragedy, when people are overwhelmed by hopelessness and feel powerless to do anything for themselves, our reports are causing uneasiness amongst many quarters abroad. We address this section mainly to the expatriate community with a view to raising some important questions concerning our survival and our future. **Whether they like it or not their wishes, perception and activities very much influence the fate of the people at home. Moreover in the meantime, large numbers of boys and girls are voluntarily and involuntarily giving their lives, and people with no avenue to leave are bearing the brunt of the war.** Thus, those who make judgements and influence the course of events have a grave duty to seek out facts, think seriously and understand what it means to the community and where we are heading. There are many who supported the cause, directly or indirectly helped to destroy lives, then came out of it saying they made a mistake, and devote themselves to pursuing lives and careers in the West. To them the whole experience was as water off a duck's back. Many more are likely to follow this irresponsible course. But to the community at home, the damage done is irreversible.

On the other hand if they take responsibility for what has happened, dissociate themselves from present trends, enlighten others and move towards creating a new history, they can make a positive contribution. This would also create space for healthier developments at home and influence benignly the culture of the world as a whole.

We need to first look at the struggle in the context of Sri Lanka's history and explode some myths that are prevalent in the Tamil middle class – particularly abroad. We need to see the historical connections and pose the question whether we ever had a liberating politics.

We will not go into matters that have been written about at length elsewhere. But we merely highlight some developments and pose some questions. When the majority Sinhalese community succumbed to the politics of narrow nationalism, the process of nation building was destroyed from within. Politicians from the minorities too responded with variations of the same ideology. They became prisoners of it for their political survival. There were small groups of Tamils trying to promote alternatives, creative responses to Sinhalese chauvinism. They failed, partly on account of their own limitations, and largely because of the potency of narrow nationalism. When questions were raised about the honesty of politicians, their hypocrisy and the world of a difference between rhetoric and reality, there were the usual cliches concerning motherland, purity and traitor. At best people were told to ignore appearances and not to embarrass the politicians who were trying to achieve something. The militant struggle was super–imposed on this politics without exposing the totalitarian and futile nature of narrow nationalism. Some of the militants who tried, came up against the same kind of rhetoric and often had a fate more tragic than that of their non–militant predecessors.

In the actions and rhetoric of the dominant politics of today, we see the clear stamp of the narrow nationalist legacy of the TULF, although the difference between rhetoric and reality is far more glaring. How successfully has this politics strengthened community feeling among the Tamil speaking peoples? Instead of seeking to unite Tamils and Muslims in the East, why did this politics also have to create division and bitterness in the North where no such existed? Can a liberating politics rely on fomenting hatred and appealing to sectional interests for mobilisation? Today we are witnessing the horror of the logical progress of our narrow nationalism.

It is not our task here to discuss issues of violence and non-violence, but it suffices to point out that the history of liberation struggles with a military component, have produced great men of thought and action such as Mao Tsung and Hamilcar Cabraal, to name a few, who have written extensively on the subject. Our leaders too payed lip service to them. There are two things about which they are clear. The struggle must be about defending the people, on whom it is centred, and a liberation fighter is one whose presence inspires confidence and makes the people feel their human potential. To take the second, in our struggle people have only been made to feel degraded and worthless. In many situations here, the presence of a fighter actually inspires fear and anxiety. The question too often asked is what trick will he play to get the other side kill us? In place of assurance we too often find women and children fleeing and screaming without any guidance, or people cowering in silent fear afraid to complain, awaiting the grim fate of the inevitable. What we have seen is the erosion of any sense of cohesiveness in our society. And in consequence of identifying fighting with having a gun and the ability to kill, what have we produced? A liberation army or a killer machine?

A large number of our expatriates would contend that they went abroad for the sake of their children. They must know what it means for an eleven year old child to be sent about with a gun without the parents having any influence in the matter. What then of a struggle that makes a virtue of this, knowing well that these children are only machines with no understanding of what they are doing, merely satisfied that a good meal is on the way? The elite are certainly privileged when it comes to their children. Do these child recruits have the philosophical maturity to cope with their short and brutish lives being snuffed out and in particular their limbs blown up? Do people know the agony and the cursings of the injured?

Further, how does the military strategy square with the concept of liberating the people? Here again myths are built up based on a few sensational attacks like in Kokkavil and Mankulam, which have made headlines. Those in Jaffna and abroad can dwell on these to their satisfaction with no sense of concern or sensitivity to the plight of the people in the East who suffer the terror of the army and the STF. What was the politics behind their suffering? It is easy enough to take a foreign reporter to parts of the East or even to a suburb of Batticaloa and pretend that it is a liberated area. But what is the reality? Is there the will or the ability to protect a single civilian home in the North or East? There seems to be an awareness of reality only when an army walks in to parts of Jaffna with its attendant consequences as has happened twice recently, which we easily forget. We

also forget that there are Tamils outside Jaffna. With this forgetfulness that accompanies idle triumphalism, how capable are we of seeing the overall picture? Are not the Tamils and the country losing inexorably all the time? What are the factors that lie behind this military strategy?

There is also something sensationally unique about our struggle. Almost every liberation struggle has been fought by a number of groups. Very seldom has one group set out to ban other groups. Where this happened it was always after the enemy's capitulation. Is it a sign of exceeding strength or of the need to silence reason in order to defy reality? Is it not a sign of fatal sickness, a part of the same militant psychology that forces people in a besieged peninsula to put up festive decorations in the sight of angry air force pilots?

The more we dig into reality, the more indefensible the whole thing becomes. When the Tamil elite are questioned by foreigners, they would readily run down the Sinhalese, talk about the insecurity faced by Eastern Tamils because of state violence coupled with colonisation, and about the exploitation of hill-country Tamils, throwing in slogans like 'Don't drink Ceylon Tea – It is Tamil blood'. But how has the current politics tried to address the very real problems of these people?

During the 14 months of the LTTE-Premadasa honeymoon, did the LTTE put forward a cogent set of proposals to resolve the constitutional issue and the thorny land question which is a matter of life and death for Eastern Tamils? There was one hartal on the citizenship question of a group of hill-country Tamils shortly before the outbreak of war. This served to drive home to the government, the LTTE's capacity to paralyse the North-East through its gun power. But then, was the issue of hill-country Tamils addressed with any cogency before or after the hartal? Where were the rights of the people during the LTTE-Premadasa talks? Were they not mostly about how many people from which party are to carry guns and where? Was not the most disgraceful arresting and torturing of ordinary Tamils against whom there was some suspicion of political links one of the few issues on which working agreement was reached?

Is it not time to face the truth that Eastern Tamils and Hill-country Tamils and sometimes the Muslims, are only being used in a politics that springs from the Jaffna man's ego? How else does one explain the military strategy in the East? Why have started the war in the East where the Tamils were mostly endangered? If there was seriousness about the Eastern Tamils' well being, why stir up the contradictions by killing hundreds of policemen taken prisoner, including Muslims from that area? If a mistake had been made could not the prisoners have been used to bargain for the safety of Tamil civilians? Or if too late, admit that a mistake was made and take disciplinary action against the offenders as part of the ceasefire process? Then to tell a cringing people that this was the final battle, incense a brutal army by desecrating bodies of dead servicemen (Kalmunai), explode land mines when troops were approaching civilian concentrations and run away, leaving the civilians to fight the one sided final battle!

Is not this military strategy based on simply using the anger and misery of Eastern civilians facing an undisciplined army, just to get recruits? And where are these recruits being used? – mainly to fight in Jaffna and not to liberate their own land! Our politics had become so degenerate that in many parts of the East, it did not require sophistication on the part of the government to set the Muslims on Tamils and then to step in as protectors of both Muslims and Tamils at the same time.

Is Peace Possible?

Now that talks of ceasefire and negotiations is once more in the air we need to go into the important causes of the conflict. The LTTE had earlier talked to the government about power for itself and not about the people. As both a bargaining chip and in preparation for other eventualities, it launched a parallel military build up and recruited thousands of children at a time when the larger expectations of ordinary people were about permanent peace. To break through this mood and attract recruits, the LTTE had to resort to the language of violence saying that the present arrangement was only a temporary solution and their goal was Tamil Eelam. This created an internal dynamic of its own necessitating war. On the other hand different sentiments were being uttered in Colombo, in English.

Coupled to this, the major political parties of the South have never shown tangible concern for the Tamils, and whenever there was a crisis, they had quickly agreed upon a military solution. With the politicians abdicating responsibility, the army was sent in without political guidance and without a parallel political process to give the Tamils confidence. With the army having done its stuff, it ended up demoralised and looking weak. Even if talks get going now, it is being too optimistic to expect from Southern politicians the kind of wisdom that will address the Tamil people and not just the militant groups.

The LTTE now appears to be talking about Federalism and the Canadian constitution for international consumption. Its weakness prompt it to look for some diplomatic gains to justify having started the war. It will skirt the question of whether it was worth all the lives lost and bringing the society to the brink of collapse? Whether there was not a public mood in the South that was willing to be generous, with the term Federalism appearing in much high level discourse? Whether the same thing could not have been achieved by mobilising the people politically?

Of course the Tamils need a form of Federalism that would guarantee their security and unfettered development. But as we have shown, there is no solution unless the present mould of our politics is broken. We need a form of politics that will genuinely respect the Sinhalese and Muslims and not seek to kill and humiliate them. We need to be responsible by them.

Such a politics can emerge only by placing the people at the centre and guaranteeing their democratic and human rights. It is only then that the ordinary common sense of the people would assert itself. There is much that can be done by Tamil expatriates to create such a space.

No political will – EPRLF

Neither the government nor the major opposition parties in the south seem to have the political will to reach a lasting solution to the ethnic problem, EPRLF leader and Member of Parliament, K. Premachandran said.

He said that his party was unhappy with the lack of progress in the talks at the All Party Conference which had dragged on for months with no sign of a permanent settlement.

The talks so far had concentrated on the unit of devolution and the other matters like the powers that will be devolved had not been taken up, he added.

Asked if the EPRLF was thinking about pulling out of the APC because of this apparent lack of progress, he said that that was an option that had to be considered if nothing fruitful emerged from the talks.

He also dismissed the allegations made by the Muslim United Liberation Front (MULF) which withdrew from the Tamil – Muslim talks under the APC the week before last, saying they were prepared to talk to iron out the few remaining differences between the two sides.

He said that they had worked out the ethnic Councils for the Tamils and Muslims in the north-east but there were still some differences of opinion on matters like the EPRLF's demand for more power for the Provisional Council apex body.

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A Surrealist Essay

The 'Self' as Obstacle to Peace in Lanka

BETWEEN DEATH AND UTOPIA

G. Ramesh

(Paper presented in a Seminar [October 7-10, 1990] on Obstacles to Peace in Sri Lanka, organised by Minority Rights Group, Swedish Section, Uppsala, Sweden).

(Continued from last issue)

Thus, when, Sinhalese are butchered in Anuradhapura (June 1985) or a bomb is set off at the busy Pettah area in Colombo (April 1987), it is to only make the government 'see reason' in order to suspend its ongoing offensives and bring it to the negotiating table, at Thimpu and New Delhi. When Tamils of Valvettiturai are bombed and killed (May 1987, August 1989 and now) they are punished for being the neighbours of Prabhakaran, an insult of pure circumstance for the government. When Muslim congregations are massacred, it is only to convince them that they as a minority cannot go on collaborating with the Sinhala chauvinists. Any number of such instances can be cited.

Several such acts inevitably reach the level of a spectacle in their execution and justification, enacted for their utility value in the media. Each of them becomes an incident as journalistic cliche would have it. Getting the better of a situation, however traumatic it may have been, lies in the player's ability to enact a spectacle of death and 'get out of it' for a breather till the next situation. To that extent, the sense of a win is good media management, something lacked by the Indians, but found in abundance with the LTTE, and to a less extent with the Lankan government.

The question concerning media is not the documentation of facts or that of managerial ethics, but something totally different. In the recent Hollywood film Batman, journalist Wicky Wale, whose report about the 'Maltese Revolution' has appeared in the Time magazine, is posed a question by Jack Nicholson playing the evil joker, just after he destroys a museum of avant garde art with heavy metal rock, paint and caricaturing. Producing a live model, he asks her: 'Would you allow your disfiguration, just as the corpses shot by you?' She recoils in horror. This time for real.

Thus, total war realises a reverse of an utopia, that is, a dystopia. A dystopia is bewildering, benumbing, mediocre and without hope, something that is recognizable as a reality today. Moreover, an utopia, by definition, is an ideal state. Hence even a democratic struggle, visualised diachronically, will not be able to achieve it. But a dystopia is synchronically approachable. It has a sense of 'here and now'. A dystopia is an utopia realised in reverse.

The issue here is that while the Tamil homeland is posited as an utopia, what seems to have got realised is a dystopia. Yet, has this been asked even as a question? Would it now be asked whether Tamil as a language would exist, say, 100 years from now.

The tragedy of Tamils is equally shared by the Sinhalese in the tragedy of the militarism of the JVP and the militarism in society. At the same time, it must also be stated that homeland utopia of the Sinhalese is hegemonist and geographical in nature, as enunciated in the concept of the whole island. Such homeland myths are generally sustained by various narratives of grudging admission on their liberalist variants.

Aren't these myths fuelled in our times by their modern Orientalist versions? This is true to the extent that exclusion has been a practice, within and without, Tamil and Sinhala societies, primarily in the form of the caste system. But the paradigms of Sinhala Buddhism, as well as Saiva Siddhanta, in their modern incarnations, have not just aspired to be universalist philosophies cast in the Western mould, but also totalist sciences constituted upon themselves. This constitution of the Self as a total objective entity, around the end of the 19th Century, has been the threshold which any modern historian of Lanka would not miss.

This is certainly not a place to have a full-fledged debate of the above issue, but it is suffice to state that chauvinism is not just the produce of 'tradition'. Perhaps it is a result of an inability to balance out two cultures of a long memory in the context of modern apparatuses of body, power and language, like the state, the prison, the army barracks, the school and the refugee camp. Perhaps it is an oblique admission of a new fact that modern apparatuses of power constitute a political technology of the self just as their traditional invariants were intolerant, full of condemnations and persecutions. At the same time, chauvinism acts as nostalgia and attempts to incorporate modernism into it.

Witness Rohana Wijeweera, whose JVP switched over from the revolutionary myth of Che Guevera in the 1970s to the militant myth of King Vijebahu of Ruhuna (who rooted out the Cholas of Polannaruwa in the 13th Century) in the late 1980s. Witness, as an evidence of militarism, however comical it looks, the challenge of 83-year-old J.R. Jayewardene to Wijeweera for a hand-to-hand combat at the Galle Face Green. Or his enthusiasm for Prabhakaran's pistol after the signing of the July 1987 agreement, and fixing a prize for his head after the start of the war between the LTTE and the Indian troops. It has been decided that chauvinist machoism is the only answer possible. And this is the simplistic version of graduation of Lankan history from the traditional to the modern.

From the two analytic axes of death and utopia, I would like to move onto travel, something already been touched upon by the travel to be made if Lanka is to be considered a zone. Travel existed and exists as a move away from institutions in the figure of the wanderer, who is in search for the mad other propelled and constrained by his shadow, if I may be allowed to take recourse to Friedrich Nietzsche. Tradition both Tamil and Sinhala, shrewdly attempted to incorporate this as pilgrimage to be undertaken by every settled person. A pilgrimage sought to physically move the believer across and along with other bodies thereby offering a neutralisation of sorts, both of the wanderer and of himself/herself. Recall, for instance, the Kataragama pilgrimage that every Tamil had to undertake.

In the modern world, the figure of the foreign and inland tourist replaced the enigma of the pilgrim. The first tourist to Lanka should have been Marco Polo himself, since he is quoted in every travel and survival kit on Lanka: 'The finest island in the world as one approaches from the Andamans'. The figure of the tourist, who devoured the multifarious landscapes of the island, got institutionalised in the 20th Century, but it was preceded by the manufacture of these landscapes via the plantation by another kind of traveller: the plantation worker forced in from Tamil Nadu, the pilgrim quietly lost out in that it became a ritual without structural possibilities, as tea and tourism became the mainstay of foreign exchange

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in post–independent Lanka.

In the late 1960s, another kind of traveller got consolidated as an institution. I am referring to the Tamil professional who pursued his higher studies in the West, got settled there, but would remain securely bound to the genealogy of state and kinship structures. This kind of traveller, too, had a colonial origin, but its diversification into something other than the legal and educational fields would come only much later. It is sufficient to point out that this traveller intersects with his counterpart from the West who made it to see the East in the 1960s and later.

In the narrative of Eelam, for instance, death or murder is sought to be justified as travel to utopia of homeland. Homeland is as much a possibility, as the militant or rebel puts himself onto the risk of death or murder. The foreign traveller, who went for greener pastures earlier, is now the forced–out–exile perpetually producing the guilt and resentment necessary to sustain the myth of the guerrilla or militant. For the militant himself death appears as the moment his genealogical past catches up with the nom de guerre assumed by him. That is, man meeting his double in the Borgesian sense. This is true, I may be allowed to say for dissenters, betrayers and suppressors within the militants. In Tamil history, this problem has been treated as the question of assuming several titular roles. In recent Tamil history, I find it as the granting of titles to a person after his martyrdom at the hands of the enemy: second lieutenant, captain, major etc.

In a sense, the history of militantism is as much a history of rivalry between the militant themselves, both within and without. But this history has a mute past which is not that usually discussed. I am referring to the flow of youths since 1972 to the militant groups, after all avenues towards testing one's instinct for competition and rivalry were closed by the Standardization rules of the Lankan government. More than that real decision–making rested with the youths, leading to the exclusion of other people, it is rivalry and role–modelling after the archetypal Tiger which has ensured the history of desertion, betrayal and suppression. To blame, for instance the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Indian intelligence organisation, which fuelled this rivalry with the flow of arms and infrastructure, for the existence of rivalry itself, would be futile. And exclusion of the various strands of people necessarily leads to perpetual war, the impossibility of a struggle, and the manipulation of the people for status quo, whether the issue involved is caste oppression or that of women or that of the fleeing refugees.

Politically the genesis of this manipulation has come out of the frustrating experience of the futility of democratic struggles and mass campaigns in the period 1956–81. But the very concept of democracy in the context of Lanka has to be elaborated in this period.

To start with, democracy just as in several other Third World countries, operated as elite democracy, despite the fact that modernism had entered the island through universal suffrage and granting of trade union rights. Independence arrived without a struggle. The well–known disenfranchisement of plantation Tamils in 1948, ensured the continued domination of the elites, with the etiquette of democracy operating in the peer group like a club. The club, though official and open, operates by exclusion. It claimed to understand governance and diplomacy in a sense distilled from the disturbances of plebian affairs, except for the manipulable issue of chauvinism. In the course of time, this got translated as participation by Sinhala masses in the victories of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in the 1950s.

All this is too well known to be discussed here. Yet what I have attempted here is spatialization of the current narratives on Lanka, giving ourselves a new understanding of the self in the light of what we have come to know about power, body and language, whether it is traditional or modern or an uncomfortable synthesis of the two, leading to exclusions. I understand that no narrative can be all encompassing.

In this context, I would like to cite the Thucydidean attempt by four authors, including Dr. Thiranagama, to retell the current history without documentarist delusions. They understood that the narrative used by a journalist like Mohan Ram, however committed he may have been, should be avoided. Yet, Dr Rajini's treatment of the trauma of women assaulted by Indian soldiers betrays the cold objectivity of an anatomist, as well as the grim face of someone waiting for martyrdom.

Politically, this means that there is a North within the South, which is unable to come to grips with itself but ending up repressing the South culturally and otherwise. This is true whether it is the articulation of what the Bofors scandal means to us Indians, or what is good for us, in the guise of development, or what we should read and view to 'keep abreast'. As those of you in the North are well aware of the existence of a South within the North in form of excluded people and minorities of all hues, it is my responsibility to state this truth and, in that, erase myself out.

(Concluded)

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violence and open warfare involving Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority and Sinhalese majority – and radical factions within both – the Sinhalese-dominated government has been trying to crush the Tamil Tigers.

While the offensive has had little apparent success in breaking the guerrillas' power in the region, it has left at least 4,000 dead and up to a million refugees.

The guerrillas, who started the latest round of fighting, have been implicated in machine-gun massacres of unarmed noncombatants and mass executions of policemen captured at remote outposts.

The government has been accused of killing dozens of people by dropping gasoline and rubber–filled 'barrell bombs' on civilian areas. Fabricated from oil drums and detonated with dynamite, the barrel bombs explode with horrific effect, spraying burning rubber that sticks to skin.

Government officials say that the tiny Sri Lankan Air Force is under orders to bomb only guerrilla targets, but that some noncombatant casualties are inevitable.

'No instructions had been given to carry out indiscriminate bombing', said the Sri Lankan defense minister, Ranjan Wijeratne. 'We have asked pilots to be careful and go only for identified targets'.

'We are at war, remember that', he added. 'We are not playing marbles. There may have been one or two accidental cases.'

Sri Lankan officials say they are trying to root out and smash the Tamil Tigers, a tightly disciplined guerrilla force that from 1987 to 1989 fought off more than 70,000 Indian Army troops brought in to impose peace on the island.

The thousands of disappearances in Batticaloa and other Tamil regions suggest that in trying to destroy the guerrillas, the government may be following the same strategy it used against the Maoist People's Liberation Front, which bid for power in the south in 1988 and 1989.

By unleashing paramilitary death squads in areas controlled by the front, executing an estimated 20,000 young Sinhalese suspects and burning their bodies by the roadsides to frighten sympathizers, the government crushed the front within two years.

'What we face now is the attitude that we can get rid of the Tigers by killing everthing that might possibly be a Tiger or making them disappear', said the Reverend Harry Miller, a Jesuit priest from New Orleans, who has worked in Batticaloa since Sri Lanka won independence in 1948.

(International Herald Tribune 19.2.91)

NEWS ROUND-UP

● **A LT. COLONEL** of the Sri Lankan army is facing an inquiry before a four-member military tribunal for his failure to report for duty in 'operational area in North-East' Sri Lanka. At the time the war broke out between government forces and the LTTE in June last year the Lt. Colonel was stationed in Anuradhapura, and when ordered by his superiors to report for duty in the North-East, he had failed to do so.

● **SPECIAL TASK FORCE** commandos waited in ambush in a nearby house and shot dead the Karathivu (eastern Sri Lanka) area leader of the LTTE, Indran, on 20 February when he visited the house of his girl friend who apparently had returned from Colombo.

● **TWO SOLDIERS** including an officer were seriously injured after treading on anti-personnel mines in two separate incidents at Chenkalady in eastern Sri Lanka on 24 February. On the same day a policeman belonging to the STF was killed and an Inspector and a Sub-Inspector wounded when Tigers attacked the STF team conducting search operations in Rafuskulam area in Thirukoil in the east.

● **THE SRI LANKAN NAVY** seized six fibre glass dinghies in two separate incidents on 25 February with at least 22 persons. Three of the six vessels were going from the direction of south India when naval craft intercepted them north of Point Pedro in northern Jaffna and took into custody twelve Sri Lankan Tamils. Three hundred gallons of lubricating oil and six hundred gallons of diesel were also recovered. In the second incident, the navy intercepted and seized three more fibre glass dinghies going towards India from Sri Lanka. Nine Sri Lankan Tamils and an Indian national were taken into custody along with a quantity of gold.

● **POLICE SOURCES** revealed on 27 February that 18 persons allegedly belonging to the outlawed JVP/DJV were rounded-up at a hideout deep in the jungles in the Danigiriya area near Siyambalanduwa. Three firearms were also captured during the raid.

● **A 22-YEAR OLD** woman was caught in the cross fire and killed on 28 February in an armed clash between cadres of the LTTE and PLOTE at Thandikulam in Vavuniya.

● **FIVE SOLDIERS** including a junior officer attached to the 22 Brigade of the Gajaba Regiment of the Sri Lankan army were killed and two more were injured in an LTTE ambush on 27 February at Palampatarru in the Trincomalee district.

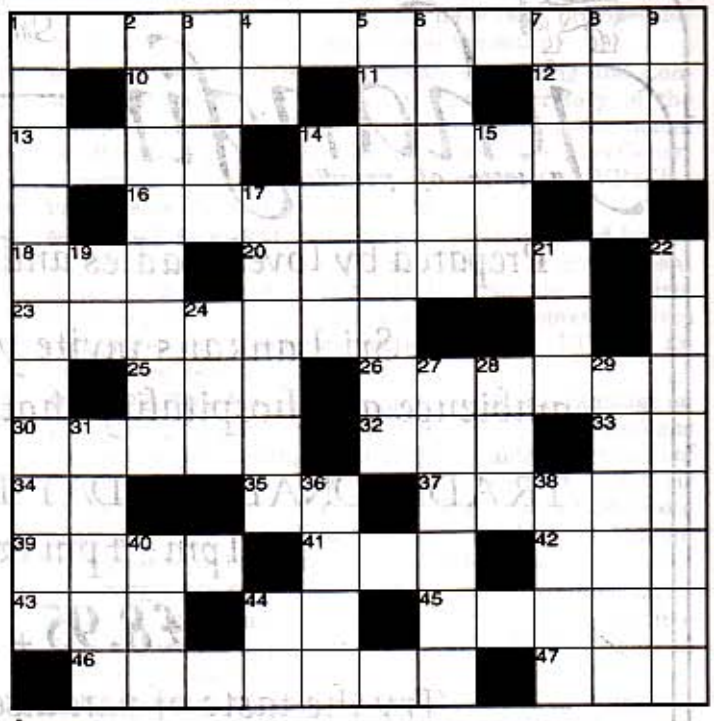
● **THE LTTE** is reportedly engaged in raising a 15,000 strong 'Tamil National Army' in North-East Sri Lanka and recruitment and training had already begun. Young persons, many in their early teens, are being recruited both on a voluntary basis and by conscription.

● **THREE SECURITY** personnel were killed and two more were injured when Tigers ambushed a military patrol on the Pulukunawa-Mangala Oya road in Amparai on 7 March. Defence Secretary Cyril Ranatunga at a press briefing said that an LTTE boat was attacked and destroyed by the navy killing 6 LTTE men. A LTTE member who survived the attack was captured.

● **AN ESTIMATED** 6000 Sri Lankans including a large number of women face deportation from Taiwan. They had reportedly entered the country through illegal means after paying large sums of money to job agencies in Colombo. The workers, most of them unskilled hands, are reportedly paid handsomely in Taiwan with monthly wages averaging from Rs.50,000 to Rs.90,000. The bulk of the workers are from the North-Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Minister of Labour and Vocational Training, Mr. G.M. Premachandra said that these workers had requested the

Continued on Page 21

QUIZ CROSSWORDS – No. 2. Set by: Richards



Across.

1. Northern-most Sri Lankan revenue division (12)
10. Mischievous sprite (3)
11. Chemical symbol of metal that has the highest electrical and thermal conductivity (2)
12. Dig, weed, scrape or till (3)
13. Embodiment of the female energy of Lord Siva (4)
14. Love and romance is very much in his feelings – felt or expressed (7)
16. Richness of the Dravidian heritage was marked even during this period (4, 3)
18. Indicates a fighting vessel of this land, abb. (3)
20. A popular auto from the Land of the Rising Sun (6)
23. The 8th and the most important avatar of Vishnu (7)
25. 'I am Sir Oracle . . . when I — my lips let no dog bark' – Shakespeare (2)
26. Famed cultural and religious centre of Hinduism in Sri Lanka has historical significance as well (6)
30. Voluntary contributor (5)
32. — carte, when ordered as separate items (3)
33. Refers to a part of the Bible, abb. (2)
34. US legal official popularly elected, abb. (2)
35. Abbreviated, an African state with intolerable racial laws or the first note in 'arohanam' (2)
37. Fourth dynasty Egyptian pharaoh who built the Great Pyramid of Ghiza (5)
39. Smallest particle of a chemical element (4)
41. Portuguese territory annexed by India in 1961 (3)
42. Thick floor-mat (3)
43. First three letters in the name Jesus in Greek symbolises 'By this Conquer' (3)
44. — and off, now and then (2)
45. Sun enters this zodiacal constellation at the autumnal equinox (5)
46. The last king of Jaffna deported to Goa and executed there by the Portuguese (7)
47. Sick (3)

Down:

1. Jaffna's citadel of American missionary education (11)
2. An administrative or organisational section (8)
3. Afghan ruler (4)
4. Popularly an elected representative in parliament (2)
5. Some marvels of today's technology appears to have been visualised in this great Indian epic composed around 300 B.C. (8)
6. As much as one likes (5)
7. A negative reaction could be a letter in the Greek alphabet (3)
8. Bread consecrated in the Holy Communion (4)
9. In addition or besides (4)
14. Soon, shortly (4)
15. Fibre preparation in wool spinning (3)
17. Miscellaneous category (6)
19. Short senior (2)
21. Pointed tool in leatherwork (3)
22. Common enemy of Sri Lankan and South Indian kingdoms at the close of the 15th century (8)
24. Communication public utility all over Sri Lanka, abb. (3)
27. A substance that neutralizes acids (6)
28. '—, a note to follow soh' from the delightful von Trapp family story (3)
29. Spread out (6)
31. Amidst the corrupt these are purely ceremonial (5)
36. Vedic god of the fire, a mediator who takes offerings to the gods in smoke and returns to the earth as lightning (4)
38. — at orbi, a papal blessing 'to the city and the world' (4)
40. Order of Saint Augustine (3)
44. Slogan of an Old Kinderhook candidate in the 1840 US elections now signifies approval (2)

Closing date for completed grid and coupon to be received is 30 April 1991.

Answers and the name of the winner – first all correct entry pulled out of a bag – will be announced in the May 1991 issue.

The winner will receive a prize of £20.00 sterling.

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NEWS ROUND-UP

Continued from Page 19

government to intervene on their behalf, but as Sri Lanka had no diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Sri Lanka could do very little. However, the Minister promised to make representations to his counterpart in that country.

● **FIERCE FIGHTING** resumed between cadres of the LTTE and PLOTE on 9 March at Thandikulam in Vavuniya when the LTTE attacked PLOTE positions. At least two members of PLOTE were killed and two more were injured in the attack.

● **THE EELAVAR DEMOCRATIC FRONT (EDF),** the political wing of the Tamil militant group EROS, has thanked the President for releasing fifteen of its members, including Karan, identified as the EROS military commander two days after they were taken into custody in the wake of the assassination of the State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne. Denying any connection with the assassination, the EDF press release stated that it had given up the armed struggle and entered the democratic process since the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987. 'We continued to function by these guidelines even when we were threatened and attacked by several armed groups. We never turned away from searching for a viable solution for the problems of the Tamil speaking people through peaceful means. We call upon all those who connected us to the recent bomb blast or any other violent activities to understand our policies and principles in the context of the present situation'.

● **GOVERNMENT FORCES** began intensified military operations throughout North-East commencing 1 March. SLAF ground attack aircraft struck at alleged LTTE jungle bases in Mullaitivu district while army units launched operations in Mannar and Batticaloa districts.

As a prelude to these operations, the government had ordered thousands of refugees and other civilians in the Madhu church area to move out. The local population in several areas in the eastern province had also been asked to move out to make way for the planned military operations. Civilian settlements and refugee camps situated allegedly close to LTTE strongholds had also been asked to vacate.

In the Mullaitivu district, SLAF's Sia Marchetti bombers carried out bombing raids and helicopter gunships carried out strafing against several alleged LTTE bases in the jungles of the interior.

Bombing raids were continued in the Jaffna peninsula.

● **SINCE THE OUTBREAK** of war in June 1990, persons belonging to the low income groups living in the Jaffna and adjoining districts have not been issued dry rations or food stamps to which they are entitled. Normally free food stamps are issued to those persons whose family income is less than Rs.700 per month. Each member of such a family is entitled to free food stamps valued at Rs.30 per month.

● **ANURA BANDARANAIKE,** MP and National Organiser of the SLFP, addressing a rally of party delegates in the Kandy district said that a broad-based anti-UNP front should be formed to defeat the UNP at future elections. Political parties representing the Tamil and Muslim minority communities should be in such a front. The party should not only win the goodwill of the Tamil plantation workers, but also should be prepared to enter into an agreement with S. Thondaman if he was willing to do so.

● **FIVE PERSONS** reported to be area leaders of the LTTE were killed in a Special Task Force operation in Wembadikulam in Potuvil during the first week of March. The victims have been identified as Master, Kennedy, Lloyd, Domminic and Sinnavan.

● **ALTHOUGH** the University of Jaffna has been reopened, attendance by lecturers and students is reported to be below expectations. University teachers and students belonging to the Muslim community have not been attending the University due to fear after Muslims were forcibly evacuated from the north and facilities have been provided for them to attend other universities in the south.

● **B. SIRISENA COORAY,** Minister of Housing and Construction, has been appointed General Secretary of the ruling United National Party following the assassination of Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne. Mr. Wijeratne was appointed General Secretary of the UNP after the murder by the JVP of his predecessor Mr. Harsha Abeywardene.

● **OF THE SEVERAL** hundred policemen captured by the LTTE as the 'war' between the Tigers and government forces broke out, it is reported that 43 are still alive. According to the ICRC in Sri Lanka, their representatives had visited these policemen detained by the LTTE at an undisclosed location.

● **SUSPECTED** Muslim homeguards went on a rampage on February 20 at Eravur killing at least four Tamil civilians and seriously wounding about 25 others in the aftermath of an alleged attack by LTTE cadres in which two of their fellow homeguards were shot dead. The Tamil victims were passengers in a bus which was intercepted by the Muslim homeguards and the bus itself was set ablaze.

● **FIFTEEN SOLDIERS** were killed in a Tiger ambush on 23 February at Vaharai and on the same day another five Special Task Force personnel were killed by the Tigers in eastern Sri Lanka.

● **AN ESTIMATED** 30,000 civilian Tamils from Batticaloa district who abandoned their homes fearing army attacks are still said to be living in the jungles undergoing severe hardships.

WORLD BANK CALLS FOR DEFENCE CUT

World Bank pressure to prune down defence expenditure has caused a dispute between the Treasury and Ministry of State for Defence.

Informed sources say that the Treasury had refused to grant the Defence Ministry, Rs. 8 billion which it wanted for defence expenditure for the current year.

The State Minister for Defence, General Ranjan Wijeratne who was reported to have been furious at this decision by the Treasury had threatened that he would terminate all military operations in the Northern and Eastern provinces unless the Treasury provided the money.

General Wijeratne who was known to be a tough-talking hardliner, had made his decision clear on the day before he was assassinated in a bomb explosion, informed sources said.

As a result of this, the Treasury had almost immediately promised the State Minister an allocation of Rs. 2 billion, the sources said.

They also revealed that the World Bank had told the government to cut down on defence expenditure as a precondition for the provision of more aid to revive the economy. As a result, the Treasury had been forced to cut down rapidly on defence expenditure triggering off a dispute between Defence and Treasury officials, they said.

Treasury officials are reported to have guaranteed the late State Minister for Defence just prior to his death that the Treasury would somehow meet the increasing demand for more defence expenditure.

The two billion rupees which the Treasury had agreed to release would be sufficient only for a short period, a defence official said.

'There is a stock of military cargo waiting at the Port.

'On the other hand apart from arms and ammunition, the government has to spend more than 300 rupees per day for each serviceman', he said.

Reactions to Wijeratne's Murder

President R. Premadasa: Ranjan Wijeratne was brutally killed because he made a concerted and determined effort to save innocent Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims from the vicious clutches of terrorism. He was committed to the cause of safeguarding democracy and human freedom in the country. Wijeratne was a great son of the soil who sacrificed his life to ensure the protection and security of the people. He worked with a deep sense of duty and commitment. His name would be written in golden letters in the annals of our country as one who sacrificed his life by trying to protect the people and the country. If those responsible for the killing of Mr. Wijeratne thought they could by this act stop the struggle he fought, to preserve the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unitary status of the country, they were wrong and sadly mistaken. The fight would continue.

Indian PM: 'I am deeply shocked to hear about the tragic demise of Minister Ranjan Wijeratne as a result of a terrorist bomb attack. My government strongly condemns this dastardly and senseless act of violence'.

Cabinet Minister S. Thondaman: 'The death of Ranjan Wijeratne is a great loss to the country. He had a rare personality and was very forthright in his dealings. From what I know of him, he is non-communal and a close friend of the Ceylon Workers Congress. I have lost a personal friend'.

LTTE: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which was suspected by certain circles in Colombo of being responsible for the bomb attack denied any involvement. 'The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam denies categorically any involvement in the attack on Ranjan Wijeratne and his bodyguards in Colombo on March 2'. In a later statement the Tigers said, 'The LTTE acknowledges that he (Mr. Wijeratne) symbolised the Sri Lankan racist and oppressive system and was instrumental in the murder of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians and his demise is a sense of relief for the Tamil people'.

SLFP: The leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and Leader of the Opposition Mrs. S. Bandaranaike said that Ranjan Wijeratne was a tireless worker who served the country with dedication and a high sense of public duty. The SLFP was deeply shocked and distressed by his tragic death as a result of a bomb attack by hitherto unknown assassins. The fact that this dastardly attack took place in broad daylight in the heart of Colombo, the capital city, was a matter for alarm and concern. 'We mourn his untimely death and convey our deepest sympathies to the members of his family in their hour of sorrow'.

Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF): A press release from the TULF said: 'The TULF Central Committee was shocked and dismayed at the cruel assassination of Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Minister of Plantation Industries and State Minister for Defence. Mr. Wijeratne approached problems from a perspective which was diametrically opposite to that of ours. His duties and responsibilities compelled him to approach questions from the perspectives of the state and of its security, while we approached the same issues from the perspectives of the individual and human rights. He nonetheless commanded our respect for his honesty, forthright manner and the energy and dedication that he brought to bear on his responsibilities. He was accessible at all times even to the media and to his political opponents. He did not engage in petty intrigues which have marred our politics for decades. He would not tell us one thing in private and say another in public. When he disagreed, he stated so publicly. . .His brutal murder is sad commentary on our political history. Too many of our leaders, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Vijaya Kumaranatunga, A. Amirthalingam have become victims of cruel assassinations at the prime of their political career.

LSSP: A statement issued by Mr. Batty Weerakoon on behalf of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party deeply regretted and strongly condemned the terrorist act of violence which killed Mr. Wijeratne. Whatever differences they might have had with Mr. Wijeratne and the party he represented, the LSSP always found him a Minister who was willing to intervene courageously in a difficult situation and do whatever he could.

Tamil Congress: Kumar Ponnambalam, leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, describing Ranjan Wijeratne as a fine man who acted according to the dictates of his conscience said: 'Ranjan Wijeratne was an absolutely honest man with high principles. I personally know of many instances where he was not prepared to give into considerations of race or religion. No tribute even in the most superlative terms could do justice to this very fine man'.

NSSP: The Nava Sama Samaja Party politburo in a statement blamed the government for encouraging terrorist acts by fostering an atmosphere of oppression in Sri Lanka. 'The murder of Minister Ranjan Wijeratne shows clearly that brutality and terrorism in Sri Lanka will continue under the present UNP regime.

Army Commander: Army Commander Hamilton Wanasinghe said: 'He was one of the finest Ministers we had. Everyone in the services loved him for his fine leadership. He was very forthright and looked after his subordinates well. He has been with us through the most difficult times of our country. I wonder whether anyone could provide the kind of leadership that Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne provided'.

TELO: The Tamil militant group Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation said that the country had lost a dedicated son with rare courage of conviction coupled with an unforgettable sense of humour. He was a perfect gentleman, honest politician and true friend of the Tamil speaking people. Although a true nationalist, he was deadly opposed to racialism. Though aggressively outspoken and brutally blunt, Ranjan was yet amiable, affectionate, sympathetic and charming.

Liberal Party: 'The Liberal Party regrets and unreservedly condemns the brutal assassination on Saturday of Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Minister of Plantation Industry and State Minister for Defence and General Secretary of the United National Party. The appalling loss of life of service personnel and innocent civilians in this incident makes it all the more deplorable. Mr. Wijeratne was undoubtedly one of the most powerful and most able Ministers in the current Cabinet and his violent removal is thus a bitter blow to the Government. Although Mr. Wijeratne's political outlook was very different from that of the Liberals, and although there were many occasions on which we strongly disagreed with his statements and actions, we fully acknowledge the debt this nation owes to him in helping to bring back something akin to political normalcy, without which there would have been no prospect for the survival of that little democratic political order which Liberals and so many other enlightened persons cherish. The conflict in the North and East against a violent totalitarian organisation in which Ranjan Wijeratne was recently engaged, like his successful struggle against a similar movement in other parts of the country, was in the opinion of the Liberal Party no less than a necessity'.

Communist Party: 'The Communist Party of Sri Lanka condemns the despicable assassination of the Minister of Plantation Industries and the State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne. Even those who did not share his political views respected his outspokenness and dedication with which he worked for his objectives'.

PLOTE: D. Sitharthan, leader of the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam said: 'We strongly condemn the killing of Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne. He was a straightforward and non-racist politician. He was one among the few leaders who wanted to see this country beyond all sorts of communal barriers'.

DRIVE AGAINST TAMIL MILITANTS CONTINUES

MADRAS.

The drive against Tamil militants after the imposition of President's rule in the State should not be viewed or assessed merely in terms of the arrests, official sources contended.

The sources told *The Hindu* that 44 militants and their local accomplices had been arrested till now and this included 14 top Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam men. 'The gist of the operation clean-up rests on the quality of the crackdown and not on the numbers. The effect of this drive can be seen in a drastic reduction of the arrival of militants and the LTTE operations in Tamil Nadu', they explained.

Drive to cripple: Indeed, the objective of the new drive against militants was to 'cripple' their operations, if it was not immediately possible to wipe them out. During the final weeks of the DMK regime, a majority of the LTTE men had fled the State as the signals were clear even then.

The sources said that much of the communication network of the LTTE had been busted with the seizure of six very powerful sets. Without these sets the militants were finding it very difficult to land on shore here. Earlier, even before they touched the Tamil Nadu shore, vehicles would wait for them at the appointed spot, thanks to the communication network they had established and were allowed to operate. This backbone had now been broken, they claimed.

The drive was still continuing and the State administration would have liked to hold on to the information on the arrests for a few more days as premature publicity would hamper further arrests and investigation, it was thought. But the former Union Minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, by his own revelation forced the authorities to come out with the information. At least another dozen militants are wanted by the police and are believed to have gone into hiding.

Documents seized: During the raids and arrests conducted in hardly 48 hours all over the State, interesting documents have been seized. There was a militant for instance, who had passports in three different names. Many 'hawala' transactions have also come to light along with the unearthing of Rs. 1 lakh in foreign currency, notably French Francs and Singapore dollars.

Though the serious interrogation and the basic investigations have only begun, some specific cases have been registered already against the arrested militants. They include cases under the Telegraph Act, Explosives Act and for smuggling.

The sources explained that it was well known that militants operating in an establishment in Tamil Nadu did not possess many weapons, except for their personal safety. But many ammunition dumps had been located. Only those coming by the boats were well armed to meet any threat on the seas.

Asked about the nature of collusion the militants had with the locals, the sources said that in some cases it was a 'front' to operate, while in others they were used for smuggling and procuring operations. A few local citizens were also involved in the hawala transactions, it was believed.

Vigilance on coastline: They said the drive would continue and a strict vigil maintained on the coastline. Suspected places and individuals would be under observation. The sources did not want to get into the 'political question' of why this was not done earlier or how it was being conducted now. 'Suffice it to say that we know where they are and what they are up to. They cannot escape our dragnet anymore. Our instructions are to clean up the State as quickly as possible and get on with the elections. The fact that there has been no large-scale violence after the dismissal of the previous Government, as was feared, only indicates that the administration has done its job', they noted.

By and large, the sources said, there was encouraging response and cooperation from the people for the drive. Except those directly connected with the militants, the others were willing to pass on whatever information was available. Most of the arrests were made in places such as Wallajah, Vellore, Coimbatore, Tiruchi, Madurai and Madras.

Several Sri Lankan Tamil militants belonging to various groups were rounded up in a fresh State-wide crackdown on them.

(The Hindu, 23.2.91).

Encashing on Jaffna fuel crunch

MADRAS, Feb 21.

Smuggling of petrol and diesel from the coastal areas to Jaffna appears to be more rampant now than in the recent past.

Involved in this racket are not only Sri Lankan Tamil militants but also petrol pump owners, middlemen and fishermen anxious to make a fast buck taking advantage of the fuel crunch in Jaffna, according to information reaching here.

It is said petrol is being sold at Rs. 50 and diesel at Rs. 40 per litre in the coastal areas of Thanjavur, Pudukottai and Ramanathapuram by petroleum dealers to carriers, most of them locals.

They clandestinely carry the fuel in cans in their boats after dusk and unload them onto militants' boats at mid-sea and earn hefty profits.

It is said, petrol pump owners in the coastal areas (including some politicians operating in benami names) are minting money by diverting supplies to carriers in collusion with middle level officials.

As locals make a lot of money in this racket, they are unmindful of the risk of arrest and seizure.

There is many an unguarded point along the nearly 700 km long coastline enabling the smugglers to outwit the law enforcement machinery.

In the recent crackdown on LTTE militants, over 15,000 litres of petrol and diesel were seized in coastal Ramanthapuram and Thanjavur districts.

According to an official, the LTTE militants having till recently enjoyed uninhibited ways of smuggling, have now become desperate in the face of the relentless hunt by the police check-post personnel deployed at strategic points along the coatal areas equipped with LMG and AK-47 rifles.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu male *partly qualified in Accountancy, 37, seeks partner for his cousin, 47, looks much younger, either individually or intermarriage. Widowers also considered. M 463 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek partner for daughter, 30, Colombo Campus doctor employed in Sri Lanka. Send details, horoscope to M 464 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna parents resident in USA *seek eligible partner/single parent for their pretty well educated modest daughter in late twenties, divorcee with pre-school son. M 465 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu brother *seeks partner for fair, attractive, working sister, 32. Details, horoscope to M 466 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu *seeks fair, attractive, professionally qualified, bride for brother, engineer, 31, working in USA. Details, horoscope to M 467 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu Tamil mother and brothers *seek qualified bridegroom for daughter/sister, 24, steno-typist employed in London. Send details, horoscope. M 468 c/o Tamil Times.*

Parents *seek Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu around 45-50, unmarried or divorcee without children for unmarried daughter, 45, 5' 5", accomplished and homely, American resident with green card. M 469 c/o Tamil Times.*

Brother *seeks partner for sister, 26, doctor, British citizen. Send horoscope details to M 470 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu Male, *male, 28, 5' 9", professional engineer, post graduate, British citizen seeks professionally qualified, attractive, Tamil Hindu female, 20-27, UK resident for long term friendship leading to marriage. Write with a recent photograph to M 471 c/o Tamil Times.*

FORTHCOMING WEDDING

The marriage of **Nanthakumar** *son of the late Mr. Kanapathipillai and Mrs. Kanapathipillai of Vaddukoddai East, now of 3380 Eglington Ave. East, Apt 912, Scarborough, Ontario M1J 3L6, Canada and* **Aananthagowri** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. E. Kanthasamy (Thiraviyam) of Udupiddy now in UK will take place on 27th March 1991 at the Sri Ganesha Hindu Temple, Scarborough, Canada – 27 Earlswood Avenue, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 7HX. Tel: 081 683 1812.*

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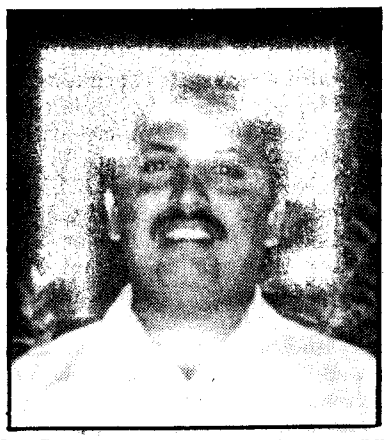
OBITUARIES

Mr. Balasingam **Shanmugasegaram ('Atcho'),** *beloved husband of Rajeswary; loving father of Rajkumar and Shamila; son of the late V. Balasingam and Mrs. R. Balasingam of Manipay, Sri Lanka; brother of Choodamani, Dr. Thalayasingam, Dr. Chinthamani, Thangaimani, Dr. Sironmani, Dr. Kangadevi, Indrani and Kalaivani passed away in Toronto, Canada on 9th January 1991 – No. 706, 91 Cosburn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4K 2G2, Canada.*



Mr. Poopalasingam Vijayakumar (Viji), *Foreman, National Paper Corporation, Valaichenai, beloved husband of the late Arunthavarani, Teacher, Kanista Maha Vidyalayam, Kilinochchi; loving father of Nirojan and Nirojini; loving son of Mr. T. Poopalasingam, Former Chief Shroff, Bank of Ceylon, Batticaloa and Mrs. T. Poopalasingam; loving brother of Jeyakumar, Hong Kong Bank, Colombo, Balakumaran, Thomas Cook Ltd. U.K., Vijayarani, Kachcheri, Batticaloa; Jeyarani, Teacher, Arasadi Maha Vidiyalayam, Batticaloa; Indrani, Kalaivani & Kavitha; son-in-law of Mr. & Mrs. K. Sathasivam, A.G.A.'s Office Lane, Tellippalai passed away on 23.2.1991 under tragic circumstances in Jaffna. May his soul rest in perfect peace – P. Balakumaran, 90 Grasmere Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 8TQ. Tel: 081 904 4970.*

Ethel Yogaratnam Hensman (Yogam) *nee Cooke, wife of the late S.C.J. Hensman; dearly beloved mother of Jeyakumar (Jeyan), Selvakumari (Gangi); mother-in-law of Dr. Philomina and Kumar Ponniah; grandmother of Darshan & Yoshani passed away peacefully on 18th January 1991. Cremation took place on 24th January in U.K. Ashes will be interred after a memorial service at Moor Road Methodist Church, Colombo.*

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of **Mrs. Vemalaranee Kanagaratnam,** *retired teacher, St. Pauls, Milagiriya, Bambalapitiya, Sri Lanka, on the first anniversary of her passing away on 31.3.90.*

Times may change, but
Memories of you never fade.
In our hearts you will always stay
Loved and remembered everyday.

Remembered with love and affection by sons Sara, Brem and Dubsy; daughters-in-law Lalitha and Shyamala and grand children Janarthan, Mehala, Uthistran, Arani and Anuja – 19 Huxley Place, Palmers Green, London N13 5SU. Tel: 081 886 5966.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

April 6 *7.00pm* **Lakshmi's Academy of South Indian Arts (ASIA),** *presents the students of the Academy in a* **Bharatha Natyam** *performance with live orchestra at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8. At time of going to press all tickets sold out.*

Apr. 7 *3.30pm* **Novena** *at* **Asian Chaplaincy**, *48 Gt. Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA. Tel. 071 222 2895.*

Apr. 7 *4.30pm* **Institute of Tamil Culture** *celebrates its 5th Anniversary with a* **Cultural Evening of Bharatha Natyam, Vocal & Instrumental Music** *at Surbiton Assembly Rooms, Maple Road, Surbiton, Surrey. For details Tel: 081 949 3012.*

Apr. 14 *Tamil New Year's Day.*

Apr. 20 *6.00pm* **Brent Tamil Association** *celebrates Tamil New Year at Alperton High School Hall, Stanley Avenue, Alperton, Middx.*

Apr. 20 *6.00pm* **Tamil Academy of Language & Arts** *celebrates Tamil New Year at Catford School, Brownhill Road, (Entrance via Stainton Road), London SE6. Computer Tamil Fonts demonstration at 6.00pm and Variety Entertainment from 7.00pm.*

Apr. 21 *1.00pm* **SCOT Tamil New Year Lunch & Raffle** *at Lola Jones Hall, Tooting Leisure Centre, Greaves Place, off Garratt Lane, London SW17 0NE. For tickets Tel: 081 870 9897.*

Apr. 21 *6.00pm Bharathidasan Centenary Celebrations –* **Carnatic Vocal Concert** *by* **Tanjore S. Kalyana Raman** *at Baden-Powell House, Queens Gate, London SW7. For tickets and information Tel: 081 904 3937/509 1263.*

Apr. 27 *7.00pm* **Bharatha Natyam Arangetram** *of* **Gayatri** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. M.T. Manikkavasagan, 7 Manning Gdns, Kenton, Middx. at Logan Hall, 20 Bedford Square, London WC1H 0AL.*

Apr. 28 Asian Chaplaincy *celebrates* **Festival of Patron Saints** *with Mass at 1.30pm in*

In Loving Memory of Our Beloved

'Papa'
Appukutty Subramaniam
Born: 11.02.1905

&

'Ammah'
Mary Gnanamah Subramaniam
15.10.1909

Married: 4.09.1929

Rest: 07.07.1990 — 24.02.1991

Appukutty Subramaniam, *J.P., Retired Station Master, C.G.R., Former Chairman, Maduvil V.C. was a dedicated community worker.*

He was the brother of late Thangammal, late Chelvadurai, late Alagammal, late Dr. Apputhurai & late Dr. Sinnathurai and brother-in-law of late Rajasundram, Sironmani, late Professor Coomaraswamy, late Thangammah & Chellamma.

Mary Gnanamah Subramaniam *was the daughter of late Robert Murugappar Sinnathamby (Well known teacher & Tamil Pandit); sister of late Sabaratnam, Thambithurai, Gunaratnam & Annapooranam; sister-in-law of late Vethanayaki, late Gnanasowndari, late Inparanee, & late Ponniah.*

They were parents/parents-in-law of Somanathan & Sarojini (Sri Lanka), Kuladevi & Jeyasingham (Australia), Karunadevi & Pooranasatkunam (Canada), Thayaladevi (U.K.), & late Paramapathy, Parisuthan (Sri Lanka), Saroja & Chitta Thasan, Raveendran & Mano Hari (all of U.K.); grand parents of Ruban & Nimma, Devina & Jeyakumar, Jeyanthan, Ajanthakumar, Sushithra, Andrea, Sonya, Nilesh, Dinesh, Mary & Grace (all of U.K.), Premini & Vijayakumar, Thevaranjan & Ranjana (USA), Arunthathy & Gnanarajan, Ajitkumar, Niruba & Piruntha (Sri Lanka), Manjula & Ranjan (Denmark), Jeyavathany & Gnanachandran (Brunei), Jeyanthi & Jeevanathan, Somina & Jeevaraj (Australia), Thevathayan & Thanju (Singapore), Rathini (India), Devaseyan, Luxmi, Yuvan Paul (Canada); great grand parents of Piriya, Ishan, Linda, David, Leena, Daniel, Praveen, Vijini, Naveen, Sanjeevan, Rukshan & Ranjeevan.

Stalwart steadfast oak thou wert
Who weathered many a storm unhurt
Lay thou thy weary limbs to rest
Thy place assured amongst the best.

To those in need, the young & old
thy helping hand was there to hold
Truly thou wert a friend indeed
To many a man of any creed

And Aunty dear god rest thy soul
Sweet was thy nature in thy role
As wife & mother, counsellor & friend
Thy goodness did the heavens send.

Alas our homeland's the poorer now
Their loss to bear they know not how
May Jesus grant thee sweet repose
Thou mild & gentle fragrant rose

Saras Rajaratnam

There will be a Thanksgiving Service for the late Mr. & Mrs. Subramaniam at East Ham Church, High Street North, Manor Park, London E12 on Saturday, 30th March 1990 at 10.30am. Relatives, friends and well wishers are invited. – Saroja Thasan, 'The Pyghtle', Penwrights Lane, Great Barford, Bedford. Tel: 0234 870028.

Sivasakti's Musical Samarpanam

The vocal music concert by Sivasakti Sivanesan on 23 February, 1991 at the Bhavan's U.K. Centre was a solemn dedication by the artiste to her guru Sangita Kalanidhi D.K. Jayaraman whose recent demise had created an irreparable loss to the world of Carnatic music.

Prefacing her concert with an apt sloka on Lord Dakshinamurthy, the Guru of all gurus, Sivasakti started with a brisk varnam by Lalgudi Jayaraman in Raga Charukesi, followed by Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Sri Mahaganapathi in Gowlai. Then came an elaborate and exquisite exposition of Raga Shanmugapriya which brought out the range and sweep of her Manodharma. Papanasam Sivan's Parvathy Nayakane which followed was chaste and moving, and included a sparkling swaraprasthara. This together with the next piece, Dikshitar's Annapurne in Shyama she had learnt from DKJ – on Siva and Sakti respectively – seemed to constitute a spiritual outpouring from Sivasakti, the musician. The rendering of Hindolan which preceded Saint Thyagaraja's rare Sanskrit Kriti Samaja Vara Gamana, ably brought out the intricate nuances of the Raga.

The rapturous accolade of the audience was reserved for the Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi in Raga Kalyani, the Raga Alapana was scholarly and brought out all the beautiful ramifications of the Raga. The Pallavi had been set to an unusual but brilliant tala pattern with the Laghu in Khanda Nadai and the Druthams in Chaturasra Nadai by Karaikudi Krishnamurthy who was present and spoke a few encouraging words. The next three items, Kunjaran Sodara in Amrutavarshini, Kanthanidam in Latangi and Mattunagar Vaviyile in Desh, which had been taught to her by her first guru Jaffna Veeramani Jyer, were evocatively rendered, as many listeners clapped with a sense of nostalgia. The presentations of Purandaradasa's Ninyako and the two Meera Bhajans which followed were flawless, underscoring Sivasakti's ability to be at ease in many languages – a matter of legitimate pride for a Tamilian! After a lilting thillana in Raga Behag composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman, Sivasakti concluded her concert with a Thiruppugazh in Raga Bageswari.

Dr. Lakshmi Jayan's violin accompaniment was noteworthy for her masterly rendering of Shanmugapriya and Hindola Ragas and the thani avarthanam by the percussion artistes – Balasri Rasiah on the Mridangam, Sithamparanatham on the Moorsing and Bala Skandan on the Ghatam – was an enjoyable treat. Radha Bhat, herself one of Sivasakti's disciples, provided the tampura accompaniment.

P.P. Kanthan.

St. George's Cathedral, Southwark followed by Easter delicacies in Conference Hall & Cultural programme in Amigo Hall.

At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ, Tel: 071 381 3036/4608.

Apr. 6 *5.30pm Discourse on* **'The Ramayana & its relevance today** *by* **Mathoor Krishnamurti.**

Apr. 6 *6.30pm* **Veena Arangetram** *of* **Sujithra & Subathra Ambikapathy,** *students of* **Smt Sivasakthy Sivanesan** *under the distinguished patronage of* **Sri Maharajapuram Santhanam.**

Apr. 7 *6.30pm* **Carnatic Vocal Concert** *by* **Sri Maharajapuram Santhanam.**

Apr. 20 *5.30pm A lecture on* **Ethics of World Religions** *with particular reference to Christianity by* **Father Michael Barnes.**

Apr. 26 *7.45pm* **Bharatha Natyam** *by* **Uma Balasubramaniam.**

Apr. 27 *7.00pm Sarod by* **Vajahat Khan.**

Sponsoring the Arts

The Minister for the Arts the Rt. Hon. Tim Renton M.P. presenting an award at the Banqueting Hall, Whitehall to Mr. Dhassi Naidoo (General Manager of G-COM Computers) for sponsoring The Academy of Fine Arts (London). On the extreme left is the Rt. Hon. Sir Rhodes Boyson M.P. for Brent North. On the right is Dr. Ratnam Niththyananthan, Director of The Academy of Fine Arts.

Ananthy, Convincing exponent of the neo-Kalakshetra style

The boom in Bharata Natyam continues with unabated vigour in India as well as among Indians abroad. An important component of the boom is the stream of student pilgrims visiting centres of dance-instruction like Kalakshetra and its offshoots in Madras. Some of them just buy a label to stick on while others bring credit to the school and themselves. Ananthy is a fine example of the latter. Daughter of an accomplished Carnatic musician S. Sridas, of Jaffna, a former senior civil servant of Sri Lanka, she has recently polished and augmented her basic dancing repertoire with a substantial stint in Madras with Adyar Lakshmanan, a Kalakshetra-trained maestro. And it all showed in the aplomb, balance, and grace, that marked her performance in the Ridgemont High School auditorium in Ottawa, Canada on March 2nd.

The opening number, 'Mallari' which is now replacing the 'Alarippu' was executed with grace and with standard Adavus, mostly. The Sabdam, (Adyar Lakshmanan's adaptation and Tamilization of Swati Tirunal's 'Sarasijakshulu') brought out the polished interpretative abilities, Ananthy has learnt from her teacher in projecting Sringara in a balanced way. But it was the Varnam in Bhairavi that put the dancer and neo-Kalakshetra technique to a real test. This Varnam 'Mohamana Enthan Meethil' is highly erotic in describing the pangs of separation and the invitation for union. Traditional Nattuvanars like S.K. Rajaratnam or Kittappa face no problem in interpreting it but Kalakshetra austerity tended towards a desiccated devotional interpretation. It is a sign of the changing times that a Kalakshetra representative like Lakshmanan has struck a middle path between a literal and metaphorical interpretation. Ananthy's presentation of the Varnam in the neo-Kalakshetra style was a credit to herself and her teacher, with a proper balance of padartha, Vakyartha and Sancharis.

The padams that followed were danced with suitable technique and grace. They were mostly romantic with the exception of the Tarangam in Hindolam from Narayana Tirtha's **Krishna Leela Taranqini.** *In fact, that was the only non-Tamil composition in the performance. The Tillana in Mohanam by Adyar Lakshmanan, different from the usual fast-tempo Tillanas, provided just enough footwork for a fitting finale. Sridas provided two melodious musical interludes on the flute and the Vina, a reminder of the family's strong cultural background.*

The proceeds of the enjoyable evening were earmarked for the Hindu Temple of Ottawa. The packed hall was proof of the audience's community spirit and cultural commitment. Ananthy and Sridas have good reason to congratulate themselves on their cultural achievement and its signal recognition.

Professor V. Subramaniam,
Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Venothini wins Gold Medal & Challenge Trophy

9-year-old Miss Venothini Indra Kumar stole the limelight at the South Indian Dance Competition at the 'Festival of Brent 1991'. She won the Gold Medal for solo events in her own age group of 7-11 years and was awarded 'Challenge Trophy' for the best dancer of the event.

Laurels are not new to Venothini. In September 1989, when she had her Bharata Natya Arangetram in Madras she was hailed by leading critics, including Dr. Balamurali Krishna as a 'child prodigy' and a 'genius'.

Venothini is the daughter of erstwhile Sri Lankan Writer – Broadcaster – Film Actor, Dr. Indra Kumar and the well known danseuse – choreographer, Vijayambigai. Venothini had learnt her dancing entirely under her mother at Vijayanarthanalaya (Academy of Indian Arts). The Academy scored a 'double gold' when its only other entrant, Miss Aruntha Amirthalingam, another Sri Lankan, won the Gold Medal in the open age solo group.

SCOT Concert Cassettes for Sale

A limited number of Video and Audio Cassettes of the recording of the Carnatic Vocal Recital by **Smt Mathini Sriskandarajah** and the Bharatha Natyam recital by **Selvi Sharmini Rajagopal** held on 16.3.91 are available for sale. The recitals are covered by a Video Cassette priced at £10 and an Audio Cassette priced at £5, inclusive of postage in both cases. Those interested are requested to write to:

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Feast of Ragas and Rhythms

Kingsway High School's Tylers Hall in Colindale was the venue of a gem of a recital of carnatic vocal music and Bharatanatyam on Saturday 16 March by Srimati Mathini Sriskandarajah and Selvi Sharmini Rajagopal respectively.

Accompanied by an excellent team of musicians – Dr. Lakshmi Jayan (Violin), Sri Somasundaram Desikar (Mirudangam), Sri Muthu Sivarajah (Ganjira and Mirudangam) and Sri Kandiah Sithambaranathan (Morsing), Mathini delighted her audience with an excellent rendering of traditional classical vocal music which is intrinsic to the culture of the Dravidian people.

She began her evening's performance with a Keerthanam in the Nattaikkurunchi raga and followed it with the melodious and ever popular 'Vinayagane' in the Hamsadhavani raga.

She continued her recital with elaborations and keerthanams in the ragas Kamas, Ananda Bhairvai, Hindolam, Kalyani and Sama and finally gathered her already spell-bound audience to the heights of a euphonious crescendo with an elaboration in the raga Kambodhi in a manner that would have won the commendations of Srimati D.K. Pattammal a specialist in this raga.

The evening was further enhanced by a scintillating performance of Bharata Natyam by Sharmini Rajagopal a virtuoso even before reaching teenage.

Beginning with a piece in the Nattai raga (Pushpanjali and Alarippu), Sharmini progressed with rhythmic splendour, beauty and subtle movements into the entrancing world of heavenly beliefs and concepts with Jatiswaram (Kalyani), Varnam (Dhanyasi), Padam (Sindhubhairavi) and brought the evening to an appropriate close with a charmingly executed Snake Dance in the Punnaga Varali raga.

Mathini and Sharmini together made the evening a soothing magic of a festival of ragas, keerthanams and rhythms to which the accompanying artistes gave splendid support. Mathini also gave vocal accompaniment to Sharmini and the nattuvangam was performed by her mother Srimati Ragini Rajagopal.

Inclement weather did not hamper in any way this SCOT sponsored evening and enthusiasts of traditional carnatic music came from many parts of London and outside.

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